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NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA 2023



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Acronyms

ACN	Action Congress of Nigeria
AG	Action Group
AD	Alliance for Democracy
APC	All Progressives Congress
APGA	All Progressives Grand Alliance
ANPP	All Nigerian People's Party
APP	All People's Party
BOT	Board of Trustees
CPC	Congress for Progressive Change
DGD	Democratic Governance for Development Project
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
HED	Higher Education for Development
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IPOB	The Indigenous People of Biafra
LGA	Local Government Area
NASS	National Assembly
NANS	National Association of Nigerian Students
NCNC	National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons
NEC	National Executive Committee
NEPU	Northern Elements Progressive Union
NLC	Nigerian Labour Congress
NLP	Nigerian Labour Party
NNDP	Nigerian National Democratic Party
NNPC	Northern People's Congress
NPC	National Republican Convention
NRC	National Working Committees
NYM	Nigerian Youth Movement
OPM	Other People's Money
PVC	Permanent Voter Cards
PU	Polling Unit
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party
PRR	Populist Radical Right
SAPS	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SEC	State Executive Committee
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SCR	Smart Card Reader
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SHA	State House of Assembly
SWAFP	Socialist Workers and Farmer Party
TDNA	Teacher's Development Needs Assessment Test
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
ZEC	Zonal Executive Committees

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Rev. Fr. Atta Barkindo, PhD
Executive Director, The Kukah Centre, and
Head of Secretariat, National Peace Committee

Executive Summary

The health of a democracy relies on strong democratic institutions, notably political parties, which play essential roles in organising elections, representing citizens' interests, and ensuring political accountability and stability. Adherence to democratic principles such as inclusivity and transparency is crucial for party effectiveness. While some scholars emphasise the positive link between political parties and democratic consolidation, others question their relevance. In Nigeria, political parties face challenges like dictatorship and ethnicity. The multi-party system, adopted in 1999, allows for diverse interests but faces challenges such as high costs and instability. Assessing political party needs is vital for strengthening democracy.

To address these issues, The Kukah Centre conducted a comprehensive needs assessment of political parties in Nigeria in 2023. This study aimed to diagnose the needs of political parties and design capacity development interventions to support them, ultimately strengthening democracy in the country. The study, conducted using mixed research approaches between April 2023 and January 2024, collected data from 18 political parties at the national and state levels. Field data collection spanned three months, from May to August 2023, with two additional respondents interviewed in November 2023. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires, while qualitative data were gathered via in-depth interviews. Purposive sampling was employed to select respondents across 18 political parties at national and state levels, with 203 questionnaires returned and analysed.

Similarly, 20 in-depth interviews were conducted with party officials, covering thematic areas such as party ideologies, organisational structure, membership processes, and capacity-building activities. Challenges faced during data collection included insecurity, access and trust issues, and time constraints, which were mitigated through various strategies. Despite limitations, such as a small sample size and methodological challenges, the study provides valuable insights into the operations and management of political parties in Nigeria.

The study's key findings include the weakness of the legal and regulatory frameworks governing the political arena in Nigeria, which leaves gaps that are easily exploitable. Other findings note the inadequacies of existing frameworks, while some express worry over the poor understanding of these frameworks by most party adherents. The study highlights the absence of clearly defined ideologies for most political parties. While a few parties identify an ideological position in their constitutions, most,

including the major parties, do not. In many instances, political parties' objectives and programmes of activities are conflated and described as their ideology. In addition

to the weak ideological foundations of many parties, many do not have clearly defined ethical guidelines. Even where such guidelines exist, there is a lack of clarity on enforcement mechanisms and sanctions, especially for party leadership.

Weak organisational structures in many political parties result in poor coordination and communication between national party organs and those at the sub-national level. Communication between party leadership and members is also deemed inadequate, along with challenges in internal and external communication and media access. Capacity-building opportunities are generally limited. The study reveals that most parties are not professionally managed.

Regarding political party membership processes, the major challenges identified include poor record-keeping and inadequate strategies for reaching new members and recruiting women and youth. Funding remains a significant challenge, impacting electoral competitiveness, especially among emerging and less established parties. Perceptions of transparency in party finances vary across parties. In general, however, the management of party finances is often opaque and not open to scrutiny by the larger party members.

Engagement in inter-party dialogue is generally weak and not well established. Where parties engage, the more entrenched and larger parties dominate other parties. This ultimately discourages new and emerging parties from engaging in inter-party dialogues. Smaller parties struggle with coordination in the legislature due to frequent party switching. Other challenges highlighted in the study relate to the absence of clearly defined campaign strategies, poor or non-existent strategies for candidate recruitment, and smaller parties' lack of capacity to monitor polling stations during elections.

Several recommendations are highlighted, as well as measures and strategies for addressing the identified challenges and strengthening political parties in Nigeria. First, parties should strengthen their ideological positions and ensure all activities resonate with these guiding principles. Given the limited understanding of the constitutional, statutory, and regulatory frameworks, political parties are encouraged to embark on widespread, sustained educational campaigns to enlighten members. A thorough review is proposed to strengthen existing frameworks to ascertain whether separate legislation dedicated to regulating political parties is required. Also emphasised is the regular review of party constitutions through processes that involve all members.

To address the lack of clearly developed party ideologies, the study recommends awareness campaigns, educational programmes, and professional support to assist parties in clarifying their

ideologies. Equally highlighted are clear methods for developing and implementing party ideology, ensuring inclusivity and transparency. Equally important are formal structures for policy development, ensuring inclusivity, and strengthening internal democracy, which is crucial in candidate selection.

The study also highlights the importance of addressing gaps identified in the aftermath of the 2023 general elections through a prompt review of the Electoral Act, 2022. Moreover, local electoral systems need strengthening to diminish the influence of governors and moneybags in hijacking and unduly influencing elections. Establishing an independent regulatory body to supervise party activities and enforce laws and sanctions for compliance is paramount. A related recommendation is the need to comprehensively review political party regulations, focusing on stricter criteria for party registration and funding transparency. A significant recommendation concerns strengthening INEC's administrative, financial, and institutional autonomy to conduct elections better and reduce perennial logistics and transparency issues.

Regarding political party management, parties should streamline internal structures and processes, enhance professionalism, and improve communication channels for better engagement between leaders and members. Other suggested improvements include more transparent membership recruitment and record-keeping practices to enhance party effectiveness and foster greater accountability. In this regard, parties are recommended to digitise online registration processes; attracting new members and promoting diversity within parties is crucial. Establishing clear structures for recruiting, training, and managing volunteers, embracing modern communication technologies, and conducting regular capacity-building workshops are additional steps.

In view of the widespread concerns about party financing and financial management, parties are strongly advised to adhere to the financial management provisions outlined in relevant legal frameworks and prioritise strategic planning. A significant recommendation centres on innovative financing strategies, diversifying funding sources beyond traditional methods, embracing avenues like online campaigns and crowdfunding, and advocating for the establishment of a new regulatory body to enforce campaign finance laws.

To address issues of indiscriminate party-switching, stricter enforcement of constitutional and statutory provisions

is recommended, to be enforced by the proposed independent body to regulate the conduct of political parties. Where necessary, some respondents recommend further electoral and constitutional reforms to address party-switching by legislators and governors. Furthermore, parties are encouraged to introduce stringent measures in party constitutions,

including penalties like suspension or expulsion, and implement reporting mechanisms mandating legislators to update parties on their legislative activities regularly. There is also a need to promote transparency in legislators' voting behaviour, for instance, by publishing voting records.

Other recommendations include entrenching collaboration with election management bodies to enhance transparency in membership processes, embracing modern communication technologies, and conducting regular capacity-building activities. Additionally, parties should establish clear communication policies and maintain functional official websites for transparent information dissemination. They are also encouraged to consistently utilise information and communication technologies for effective engagement with party members and the public. In terms of electoral campaign management, parties should develop clear guidelines for candidate recruitment and campaign management.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The health and resilience of a country's democracy are often gauged by the strength of its democratic institutions, including political parties (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), 2017). In addition to their traditional functions, such as organising elections, representing citizens' interests, and promoting national unity, political parties also ensure political accountability and democratic stability (Mainwaring and Scully, 1995). Political parties equally play a vital role in shaping public policy and mobilising resources once elected to power. In an effective and functional democracy, an institutionalised party system can hold politicians accountable. Thus, the link between political parties and governance is taken as a given, particularly due to their role in producing leaders and their indispensability. As such, it has been argued that governance deficits at the national level are directly related to those at the political level.

To be effective, however, political parties are expected to be inclusive and transparent in their operations and maintain democratic principles, especially concerning internal processes (Morton, 2017). For parties to fulfil their functions, they must have participatory and inclusive structures, be transparent and value-driven, and be capable of providing rational and evidence-based answers to social concerns.

Copious literature argues a positive link between political parties and democratic consolidation (Olukoshi, 1998; Sandbrook, 1996; Diamond and Gunther, 2001; Idowu, 2017; Dode, 2010). For example, Dode (2010) stresses that having strong and active political parties is crucial for

consolidating democracy in any country. He suggests that how political parties behave directly influences how well democracy is established in a nation. In view of this positive relationship, while the institutionalisation of political parties is considered essential to the very principle and practice of democracy and that the former is impossible without the latter, others have taken an opposing view on the status of political parties and their relevance to democratic consolidation (Patel, 2006; Musa, Ibietan, and Deinde-Adedeji, 2020).

As noted in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2005) report on Democracy in Latin America: Towards a Citizen's Democracy authored by Aguilar, Altea, Taurus, and Alfaguara, citizens have often expressed deep disappointment and cynicism about democracy and

its outcomes. Thus, it is argued that contrary to expectations, parties have sometimes undermined democracy due to their capacity and leadership deficit (Randall and Svasand, 2010). Being the weakest link in the democratic chain, the strength of political parties and their potential to strengthen democracy can also result in a reverse effect where they become the problem (Burnell Randall, 2008). Suffice it to say that the debate on the relevance of political parties continues to rage in both developed and developing democracies. While some maintain that they are no longer relevant and even counterproductive (Dalton, 2000; Diamond and Gunther, 2001; Heidar and Jupskås, 2022; Valelly, 2000), others vehemently argue that political parties have adapted to new and changing roles. In the African context, political parties have grappled with issues that range from a long history of dictatorship and neopatrimonialism, ethnicity, monetisation of politics, and dominance by the rich and powerful (Chunga, 2014).

Political party systems can be one-party, two-party, or multi-party. The greater the number, the greater the likelihood that the electorate is presented with alternative platforms. Nigeria has experimented with various systems over the last six decades. The one-party system has been touted in pluralistic societies like Nigeria to promote national unity and manage religious and ethnic diversity (Hamalai, Egwu, and Omotola, 2017). Whatever its anticipated merit, the one-party system that has been contested is more likely to result in authoritarianism and political exclusion. Alternatively, the two-party system, where parties have distinct ideological postures, as seen in countries like the U.S. and the U.K., is believed to offer benefits like providing clear and simple political information to voters, ensuring political stability and balance, and reducing the number of voting choices.

On the reverse side, however, others have pointed out the challenges associated with the two-party system, such as the exclusion of minority views, limited choice and hence voter apathy, and in some instances, negative partisanship or what has been described as affective polarisation (Hetherington and Rudolph, 2015; Iyengar et al., 2012). This system has a long history in Nigeria and was also experimented with between 1992 and 1993 (the so-called aborted Third Republic) (Adejumobi, 1997; Lewis, 1996; Oyediran and Agbaje, 1991). As with the one-party system, this also failed because the two parties were not ideologically different (Yaqub, 2002).

Since 1999, Nigeria has had a multi-party system, with several political parties contesting general elections. It is considered more suited for pluralistic societies and contexts and is more likely to offer a political platform for varied and diverse interests, including political, religious, cultural, and economic (Hague and Harrop, 2004; Tsuwa, 2014). Additionally, multi-partyism allows for opposition, integration of minority views, greater voter participation, and linkages among electoral stakeholders. Despite its merits, the system faces several challenges, including difficulty forming governments, high costs, fragmentation, rivalry, and weak or unstable governments (Kuenzi and Lambright, 2005; Mainwaring and Scully, 1995).

Political Parties Needs Assessment

The effective performance of political parties and their potential to consolidate democracy depend on several factors, sometimes determined through an in-depth analysis of gaps and barriers. The scope of the analysis can include consideration of legal and institutional frameworks regulating parties, as well as economic, political, and social circumstances. Since political parties do not operate in a vacuum, they are often influenced by various issues. A diagnosis of the needs of political parties can, therefore, be the first step in designing capacity development interventions and programmes.

Several tools have been developed to assist in determining gaps and challenges facing political parties. One notable example is the Political Party Assessment Tool, developed in 2011 by the University of Pittsburgh in collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Higher Education for Development (HED). These tools are designed to assist the parties and donor partners in providing technical assistance and engaging with political parties. The tool identifies the multiple data types required in a needs assessment and strategies for developing a research plan and conducting, collecting, and analysing data. The first consideration is the political context in which the assessment is undertaken to understand how institutional and socio-economic factors determine or influence politics and power dynamics. Three parts of contextual analysis include the level of democracy, constitutional and other legal and institutional frameworks, and the prevailing party system.

To assess parties and party systems in line with democratic development characteristics, the tool identified four critical areas. The first is accountability, representation and participation, governability, and good governance to ensure the inclusion of minorities and foster transparency and cooperation, stable and peaceful contestation, particularly given that competition is at the root of democracy and the rule of law, and fair and honest elections.

With the support of the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy, a needs assessment of six political parties was undertaken in 2019 in Ghana. The assessment showed a lack of preparedness by political parties to participate in the proposed new structure to make local governments partisan. Critically, findings from the study also showed that all the countries have serious challenges relating to local relations, logistics, and finances and hence require significant capacity strengthening.

The first and only comprehensive political party needs assessment in Nigeria was conducted in 2013 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the Democratic Governance for Development Project (DGD). The study's objective was to determine gaps and potential areas of intervention for stakeholders engaged in political party strengthening and the deepening of democracy. It also highlighted suggested strategies for intervention in designing projects and programmes to strengthen political parties. The results from the study were grouped under two thematic areas: the party system and party capacity. Regarding the latter, the study identified significant gaps in Nigeria's political party system, including the absence of an independent, robust, and clear legal framework to regulate political parties in Nigeria. The 1999 Constitution, the

various Electoral Acts, and guidelines issued by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) are mostly concerned with establishing and registering political parties and rules for conducting elections.

There is no stand-alone legislation that regulates the conduct of political parties. Secondly, the relationship between the electoral management body INEC and political parties was relatively weak. Yet, the Constitution establishes INEC with the core mandate of regulating parties. Additionally, the relationship between the various political parties is generally weak, as they rarely engage each other formally or informally. As such, there are no avenues for facilitating and promoting accommodative politics and the exchange of ideas on substantial policy and reform issues. Other gaps identified include internal conflicts and strife, eroding cohesion and leading to frequent switching between parties. The absence of underpinning ideology and policy for the political parties has reduced them to mere platforms for seeking and retaining power. Finally, the study highlighted the relative weakness of opposition parties and their lack of capacity to hold the government and ruling party accountable. Often, the party in power can mobilise state resources and take advantage of state infrastructure and apparatus, including media.

The UNDP (2013) needs assessment of political parties also identified significant challenges relating to what they term 'individual party capacity.' Despite the high number of political parties, very few have a presence and networks across the six geo-political zones. Two parties have dominated the parliament, with other parties having very few seats and often being forced into merging with one of the major parties. Party caucuses in the legislature are weak, and the capacity of members is equally limited. The key challenges facing the larger parties include inadequate and weak human capacity, especially at the sub-national level, limited internal communication at the various stages of the party, and an inability to leverage information technology. Poor record-keeping and the absence of relevant data,

such as a centralised database on party membership,

further affect general administration and performance. The study also identified other challenges confronting the major parties, such as limited research to guide policy formulation, the absence of well-established guidelines for recruiting members, and poor representation and non-inclusion, especially of women and youths. It was also noted that political parties often do not adhere to democratic principles in conducting their affairs and electing or selecting candidates. The subversion of internal party democracy has resulted in conflicts and further destabilised the political parties.

Further to identifying gaps and challenges, the assessment recommended means and strategies for strengthening and professionalising political parties to make them veritable tools for inclusive democratic participation. Regarding the party system, the report recommended more frequent and focused inter-party dialogue and an interface with INEC. Equally important are administrative reforms that make it difficult for politicians to switch between parties. It also recommended reforms to ensure that state resources are not diverted for political advantage by incumbents. Wide-ranging suggestions were also made to promote inclusion and public participation, such as through town halls.

On political party capacity issues, specific action areas include the development of baselines on which to measure political party development in Nigeria, strategic plans for parties, the establishment of a specialised institute to provide continuous capacity development for parties and their members, and greater engagement with members and the public in policy formulation. Equally important are mechanisms for parties to mobilise and manage resources, promote internal communication, and publicise party activities.

Methodology

The study was conducted after the February 2023 general elections, specifically between April 2023 and January 2024. The study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches to collect data from participants. Field data were collected over three months, between May 2023 and August 2023. Two additional respondents were interviewed in November 2023. The quantitative data for the study were collected using structured questionnaires. The survey questions covered parties' ideological and policy positions, party organisational structure, internal party processes and democracy, membership and funding, legislative profile (i.e., representation in the legislature and legislative agenda), capacity building, party communication structure, and electoral campaigns. The qualitative data for the study were collected using in-depth interviews. A purposive sampling method was adopted to select the respondents for qualitative and quantitative data gathering.

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method whereby researchers rely on their judgement and experience to choose respondents across the political parties for the study based on their knowledge of the subject matter and their ability to provide relevant information.

Three hundred and sixty (360) questionnaires were administered, with 20 administered to each of the 18 political parties at the national and state levels.

The justification for using this method is to obtain information from individuals within the party with knowledge and expertise in the operations and management of the party. Of the 360 questionnaires administered, two hundred and three (203) questionnaires were returned and analysed, comprising respondents from both national and state levels. At least one state was purposefully selected from the six geopolitical zones to ensure tolerable representation and coverage. The distribution is as follows: Osun (44), Kano (39), Bauchi (31), Katsina (30), Kogi (29), Bayelsa (15), and Imo (15). It is important to note that the questionnaires were distributed equally among respondents, but not all completed and returned their questionnaires.

Similarly, of the 36 respondents targeted for in-depth interviews, that is, 2 per political party, only 20 in-depth interviews were conducted with officials of: ADC (3), ADP (2), APM (2), BP (1), NRM (4), YPP (2), PDP (2), APC (2), and Labour (2). Respondents targeted for the interviews included the National Chairmen and their vices, General Secretaries, Publicity Secretaries, Spokespersons of the Parties, National Working Committee (NWC) members, and other party administrators. Interviews were also proposed for INEC, representatives of civil society groups that work with political parties, and members of academia. While the data generated through questionnaires were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate thematic and descriptive data, the data from interviews were analysed using content analysis.

The thematic areas covered for the survey and interviews include familiarity with the constitutional, legal, and statutory frameworks that regulate political parties in Nigeria and whether respondents consider them adequate. Respondents were also asked about the ideologies of their various parties and if, in their opinion, the party has lived up to its founding principles. Other areas covered include the party's organisational structure, including the adequacy of its operating documents, such as the constitution and ethical code of conduct. Respondents were asked about various aspects of political party administration and management, internal party processes, and democracy. The membership processes of political parties, record-keeping, and legislative profiles were equally examined. Finally, respondents provided insights into the capacity-building activities of political parties, funding, communication, and the management of electoral campaigns.

Overall, the results show that while significant progress has been made concerning the management of political parties in Nigeria, they are still faced with myriad problems that undermine their general effectiveness.

Lastly, during data collection, several challenges were encountered. One major issue was the prevalence of insecurity in Nigeria, encompassing farmer-herder crises, ritual killings, Boko Haram and IPOB insurgencies, as well as kidnapping and banditry. To address these challenges, research assistants were selected from the states where data were to be collected. They were briefed on security measures, and data collection occurred immediately after the 2023 general elections to mitigate post-election controversies. Another challenge involved access and trust-related issues.

Research assistants faced difficulty gaining access to participants due to concerns about victimisation and identification. This was addressed through referral letters to gatekeepers, assuring participants of confidentiality using pseudonyms.

Time constraints were also a challenge, given the time-bound nature of the research. Hence, seven field research assistants were engaged from each state where data were collected to ensure timely data collection. Despite these efforts, there are limitations to the research, including a small sample size for generalisation and methodological challenges related to oral testimony and survey data, such as the politics of selective memory and respondents' potential biases. These challenges were addressed by relying on key stakeholders and triangulating data sources.

BACKGROUND TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

This chapter briefly introduces Nigeria's political history from 1959 to 1983 and 1999 to 2023, covering key events like the 1914 amalgamation, the challenges of diversity, and the 1999 transition to democracy. It highlights the emergence of major political parties, such as the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All-Progressive Congress (APC). By delving into the evolution of power structures and political party affiliations, the chapter provides context for modern political parties in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

Modern-day Nigeria was born in 1914 with the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates, previously administered separately by the British colonialists. Understanding the societal differences and cultural heterogeneity of Nigeria's various nationalities is crucial for addressing the country's challenges in achieving national unity, building inclusive democratic institutions, and developing political parties. Nigeria's ethnic and religious pluralism is reflected in its constituent population. Whereas Christianity is dominant in the South and 'Middle Belt', the North is predominantly Muslim. Also, while the Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa/Fulani are the dominant ethnic groups, there are over two hundred and fifty 'minority' ethnic groups spread across the six geopolitical zones of the country (Mustapha, 2006; Uwaifo, 2016; Reed and Mberu, 2015).

Nigeria gained independence from the British on 1st October 1960 and became a republic three years later. The country practised the parliamentary system at independence but abandoned it for the presidential system in 1979 following the end of the country's civil war (6th July 1967 to 15th January 1970) and the subsequent military rule. These defining moments in the country's political history represent the earliest struggle by the country and its ruling elite to manage diversity, entrench good governance, and build functional democratic institutions. These challenges prevail to this day. The sixty-three-year history of Nigeria has been punctuated by several military coups and four distinct democratic dispensations called 'republics': First Republic (1960-1966); Second Republic (1979–1983); Third Republic, which was prematurely terminated by the military (1992- 1993); and the Fourth Republic (1999 to date).

1959 to 1983

Given the pluralism, vast geography, and significant differences in the historical and cultural origins of people in different parts of the country, the multi-party system, with two dominant parties, has been the most preferred approach since 1960. The parliamentary elections held in 1959 were contested by several political parties but dominated by the Northern People's Congress (NPC), the five other parties, and two independents with which it had entered a coalition. They controlled 148 seats in the House of Representatives, while the Action Group (AG) won 89 seats. A similar trend was maintained in 1964, as shown below.

Table 1: Composition of Federal House of Representatives by political parties, 1959-1964

Year	NPC/NNA	NCNC/AG	ZCP	AG
1959	148	89	-	75
1964	189	109	5	-

Source: Hamalaj, 2014, p.47

Five major parties competed for power in the Second Republic (1979-83). The outcome was dominated by the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), which was considered the natural successor to the Northern People's Congress (NPC) of the First Republic. It won 36 seats, while the United Party of Nigeria (UPN), modelled on the Action Group (AG), won 28. Other parties, including the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP), which succeeded the NCNC, won 16 seats. In comparison, the Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) got 8 seats, and the People's Redemption Party (PRP) won 7 seats, as shown below.

Table 2: Composition of Senate by political parties, 1979-1983

Year	NPN	UPN	NPP	GNPP	PRP
1979	36	28	16	8	7
1983	60	6	12	1	5

Source: Hamalaj, 2014, p.47

In Nigeria's First and Second Republics, the political parties were manifestly ethnic in their outlook. The NPC was dominated by the Hausa/Fulani and led by Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Premier of the Northern Region and Sardauna of Sokoto. At the same time, the deputy leader was Sir Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the then Prime Minister of Nigeria. Its successor, the NPN, developed out of the Northern Movement, a political pressure group in the north. Its founding members included prominent northern elites such as Shehu Shagari, Aminu Kano, Maitama Sule, Inua Wada, and Sule Gaya. It also included members from the Middle Belt and other parts of the country, such as Joseph Tarka, A.M.A. Akinloye, Anthony Enahoro, K.O. Mbadiwe, and Joseph Wayas. On the other hand, the AG/UPN (under Chief Obafemi Awolowo) was predominantly popular among the Yoruba in the Southwest. Accordingly, the NPP was led by Nnamdi Azikiwe, and most of its

followers were Igbo. The GNPP was also dominated by elites from the north and led by Waziri Ibrahim of Borno.

The military truncated the First and Second Republics following widespread public disenchantment with the political class and the loss of legitimacy (Diamond, 1988). Other related reasons include prolonged periods of economic decline, ethnic and religious polarisation partly made worse by ethnically based political parties, massive and entrenched corruption typified by looting of public funds and flamboyant lifestyles by politicians, and general bad governance. In addition, public disillusionment sometimes led to political unrest and widespread disorder in some regions. More fundamentally, however, it has been argued that the collapse of the First Republic is deeply rooted in the failure of the colonial enterprise (Diamond, 1966).

1999 to 2023

Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999 after sixteen years of military rule and maintained the presidential system first introduced in 1979. The political system is federalism, first introduced in 1954 to promote integration among diverse and distinct ethnic nationalities. It currently consists of thirty-six (36) states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The president is popularly elected through the first-past-the-post system, where the winner takes it all. The legislature at the national level is bicameral, consisting of a Senate with 109 members (three per state) and a House of Representatives with 360 members, each representing a federal constituency. General elections are held every four (4) years for legislative and executive positions, while vacancies between general elections are filled through by-elections. The legislative frameworks regulating the conduct of elections in Nigeria between 1999 and 2019 include the 1999 Constitution and the Electoral Act (2001, 2002, 2006, 2010, and 2010). Sections 40 and 153(f) of the 1999 Constitution guarantee the rights of all Nigerians to assemble freely and form or belong to any political party and establish the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), respectively. Part I of the Third Schedule states its functions, including organising and supervising elections and registering and monitoring political parties. There are also State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs) that regulate elections at the local government level.

Political parties are required to have a constitution at the point of registration with INEC. Other requirements include open membership to all Nigerians, a written constitution, names and addresses of national officers, national spread, non-affiliation with any ethnic group or religion, and a headquarters in Abuja, among others (S.222 of the 1999 Constitution). Parties operate at the ward, local government, state, and national levels under an elected chairperson and other officials. In addition, parties create several organs for administrative and operational purposes. These include the Board of Trustees (BOT), the National Executive Committee (NEC) responsible for formulating policies, and the National Working Committee, which operates as a sub-committee and is responsible for running the party. These committees are replicated at the state level, and their powers and functions are spelled out in the party constitutions. In addition, there is a national secretariat with a general secretary entrusted with the administrative management of the party. Party membership is open to any Nigerian aged eighteen (18) years and older who has paid the prescribed fee and is formally accepted by the Ward Executive Committee. Members are issued a membership card, and members' registers are usually kept at the party secretariat in the various wards. While the literature on the extent of political party activism through party membership in Nigeria is limited, there has been a rise in direct political engagement through information and communications technology (ICT) tools. In the period of transition from military rule to democracy in 1999, the multi-party system was adopted, and three political parties, namely, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the All People's Party (APP), and the Alliance for Democracy (AD) were registered by INEC. These parties took part in the

1999 general elections, in which the PDP emerged victorious across the polls, becoming the dominant political party in Nigeria. By 2003, the number of political parties had risen to thirty- three. The APP and AD had formed a coalition to contest the February 1999 presidential elections after the PDP's sweeping victory in the January gubernatorial elections. As a result of the alliance, APP gained some ground in the National Assembly elections, winning 88 seats (20 out of 109 in the Senate and 68 out of 360 in the House of Representatives). Regardless, the party was subsequently beleaguered by internal crises, which led to its metamorphosis into the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) in the 2003 elections. The Fourth Republic has also seen a proliferation of parties, primarily due to the weak guidelines regulating party registration. However, in 2010, following the reforms in the Electoral Act 2010 on the viability of political parties, INEC deregistered 38 parties in line with Section 78(7) of the Act.

The proliferation of political parties continued in 2017, when the Independent National Electoral Commission registered an additional twenty-one (21) to take the total number of parties to sixty- seven (67). The new parties were said to have satisfied the requirements in sections 221 and 222 of the 1999 Constitution highlighted above. However, many political parties have been able to work their way around the legal and statutory requirements and establish a superficial presence in all states of the federation. Suffice it to say that the requirement that political parties must have a nationwide appeal and presence has sometimes been criticised for failing to promote national unity, which is its original intent.

The All Progressives Congress (APC) was founded in 2013, following the merger of three major political parties, namely the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), which was itself established in 2006 following the merger of multiple parties, including the Alliance for Democracy (AD), the Justice Party, and the Advance Congress of Democrats; the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC); and the All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP). These parties had respective spheres of influence across the geopolitical zones, with the ACN having significant dominance in the Southwest and the CPC dominating the North-West and the Northeast. This coalition of hitherto fragmented opposition parties was further bolstered by the defection of prominent PDP stalwarts, including five (5) governors, in protest of alleged injustice and ill-treatment. More importantly, in the build-up to the 2015 campaign, the newly formed APC highlighted the challenges facing Nigeria since the return to democracy in 1999, including rising insecurity across the country, particularly militancy and insurgency, electoral fraud, corruption, and economic decline.

Emergence and Organisation of the PDP

In the first sixteen years of the Fourth Republic (1999 to date), the political landscape has been dominated by the People's Democratic Party (PDP). The party was among three others that successfully registered out of the initial nine that applied and were granted provisional registration on December 5, 1998. However, six other parties failed to meet the requirement that parties score at least five percent of the total votes cast in a minimum of twenty-four states across Nigeria as a precondition for final registration (Momoh and Thovoethin 2001).

The emergence of the PDP has been characterised as top-down rather than bottom-up. A national coalition of thirty-four ex-military officers, politicians, and other elites formed the G34. The group, led by Nigeria's former vice-president in the Second Republic (1979-1983), Alex Ekwueme, was a pressure group constituted to oppose attempts by

Gen. Sani Abacha to transform from a military head of state to a civilian president. After his death on June 8, 1998, Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar took over and immediately announced a transition timetable to return the country to civilian rule by May 1999. Elections for governors were scheduled for December 1998, while those for the president were slated for February 1999, with an official handover date of May 29, 1999. In addition, Abubakar released political prisoners, embarked on substantial political, economic, and social reforms, and established an independent electoral management body, the Independent

National Electoral Commission, under Decree 17 of 1998 (Dagne, 2006). Against the background of these developments, the G34 transformed into a political party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), in August 1998.

Owing to its origins as a pressure group comprising various actors from across the broad spectrum of Nigerian society, the PDP was elitist driven from its inception. This outlook became evident in the processes leading to the emergence of the party's candidate for the position of president. The founding chairman, Alex Ekwueme, was pushed aside, and the ticket was given to a former military head of state, Olusegun Obasanjo. This was done with the backing of powerful and wealthy members of the party, who considered him a more predictable and reliable option.

From the onset, the PDP lacked any ideological core to distinguish it from others and determine its policy goals. As discussed above, its founders portrayed the party as the natural successor to the National Republic Convention (NRC) and the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). This is, however, highly debatable and difficult to establish given the party's origins as a constellation of diverse and often opposing interests. This is also reflected in the party's manifesto,

which is carefully crafted to ensure the inclusion and management of diversity, particularly of the various interest groups that make up the party. Importantly, while some of the founding and initial members of the party had been collaborators with the military and even supported the annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential elections by the military regime of Gen. Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, others served as members of the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) under the dictatorship of the late General Sani Abacha.

The absence of a clearly defined ideology in the PDP was also reflected in internal party conflicts, including the choice of party heads (twelve party chairmen in sixteen years) (Hamalai et al., 2017), weak constitution and party structure, lack of cohesion, and a disconnect with members at the grassroots level. This factor significantly contributed to the party's decline in 2015, particularly given its failure to support popular candidates in party primaries.

The Emergence of the APC and the Competition for Power in the 2015 General Elections

As noted above, 2015 was a watershed in Nigeria's political history when the opposition party (APC), for the first time, defeated the ruling party (PDP) in a general election to win the presidential election and establish a majority in the National Assembly. The APC emerged in 2013 due to the merger of multiple parties, including a breakaway faction of the PDP. Results of the elections (Figures 4 and 5) showed that the party won at the centre (presidential) and established dominance in much of the north, while the PDP retained its traditional popular support in the southeast and south south. The APC also established substantial control in the Senate and the House of Representatives of the National Assembly, thus breaking the hold of the PDP.

Several factors explain the success of the APC at the 2015 polls, including growing disenchantment with the PDP over the past sixteen years. After long years of military rule, Nigerians had very high expectations at the beginning of the Fourth Republic. However, the inability of the PDP to tackle poverty and address rising levels of unemployment left millions of people disillusioned. This situation was worsened by the perception of endemic corruption and the self-enrichment of politicians and their associates. Rising insecurity in most parts of the country and the seeming incapacity of the government to stem the tide probably pushed the people to revolt against the PDP. The most prominent challenge was the rise of Islamic militancy in northeast Nigeria. A terrorist sect called Boko Haram, founded in 2002 but rising to prominence in 2009, grew and expanded rapidly, seizing control of several local governments in the country's northeast. Their activities disrupted the social and economic livelihoods of people in the northeast and led to the deaths of thousands of people.

The changes to electoral management by INEC and innovations that include biometrics-based permanent voter cards (PVC) were important factors. The use of Smart Card Readers (SCRs), which INEC introduced in 2015, has undoubtedly changed the nature of elections in Nigeria. INEC guidelines require that once at a Polling Unit (PU), a voter first presents their Permanent Voter Card (PVC) to one of the polling officials for verification and authentication using the Smart Card Reader (SCR). Only after being verified and authenticated does a voter go through the rest of the voting process (Dan-Azumi and Asan, 2021). This is arguably the most important innovation in Nigeria's electoral process since independence. It took power away from politicians and placed it in the hands of the people. Despite its limitations, using PVCs and SCRs has strengthened the democratic process and restored public confidence in the electoral process. These innovations shaped the outcomes of the 2015 and, to some extent, the 2019 elections.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept and Functions of Political Parties

Different scholars have proposed several definitions of political parties. According to Grigsby (2012), political parties are associations that nominate leaders and support them for official positions in government. Smith (1996) understands political parties as formally organised associations explicitly aiming to acquire and, to some extent, maintain legal control over government personnel and policies. In democratic systems, parties nominate candidates to compete in electoral offices such as the legislature, presidency, and governorship. Similarly, the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria reduces the essence of political parties to canvassing for votes by defining political parties as those associations whose activities include campaigning for votes in support of candidates for electoral offices. Sartori (1976) provides a widely cited definition, portraying a political party as any political group identified by an official label that participates in elections and can present candidates for public office. Catto (2000) adds complexity by conceptualising parties in various dimensions: their role in the legislature, organisational membership, influence in the electorate, participation in government, and engagement in bureaucracy. Ware's (1995, p.5) definition, though not all-encompassing, captures the core roles of political parties in many political systems. According to him, a political party is an institution that (a) seeks influence in a state, often by attempting to occupy positions in government, and (b) usually consists of more than a single interest in society

and so, to some degree, attempts to 'aggregate' interests (Ware, 1995, p.5). Hofmeister and Grabow (2011) note that the essential elements that characterise definitions of political parties are participation in elections and the interest in gaining public offices and mandates. For Karu (2005) (cited in Karu, 2011), political parties are officially recognised groups. Their members share certain views on society's political, socio-cultural, and economic organisation for the greater good. These parties aim to translate these ideals and values by seizing government control through competitive, free, fair, and ethically conducted elections. Hence, parties are entities characterised by members sharing common values, ideals, and aspirations, actively engaging in organised contests, and struggling for political power. Karu (2011) says this definition captures a broad understanding of political parties and can be applied to studying developing democracies. This is because this definition identifies the characteristics and nature of parties in both new and old democracies.

Scholars have discussed several political party functions (Diamond and Gunther, 2001; Mohammed-Bande, 2014; Heywood, 2013; Joseph and Nzube, 2023). Political parties are essential institutions in the democratic process (Burnell, 2007). They serve to recruit and present candidates

for political offices, express public opinion, aggregate diverse interests, and provide a connection between the voters and governments. In addition, political parties also facilitate coalition, create opportunities for popular participation, and promote political education for national integration (Mohammed-Bande, 2014). Likewise, Diamond and Gunther (2001) point out some of the main functions of political parties, including nominating candidates for elections, mobilising candidates for elections, structuring, representing citizens, integrating society, aggregating interests, and forming and sustaining governments.

Constitutional and Regulatory Frameworks

Political parties in Nigeria are regulated by the 1999 Constitution, the Electoral Act, 2023, and other guidelines and regulations developed and published by INEC pursuant to its powers to do so. Section 40 of the Constitution guarantees the right to form political parties and freedom of association and assembly. It states that;

It further guarantees equality regardless of political party affiliation (Section 42).

“every person shall be entitled to assemble freely and associate with other persons; in particular, he may form or belong to any political party, trade union, or any other association for the protection of his interests.”

Campaign financing and the conditions under which political parties are to operate in Nigeria are spelled out in Section 222. The only platforms for seeking votes and elective office are political parties. The requirements for the formation of a political party are contained in Section 222 and include the following:

- 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 their 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 in such form as may be prescribed by 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 alteration;
- e. The name of the association, its symbol, or logo does not contain any ethnic or religious connotation or give the appearance 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 are situated in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

The constitution and regulations of political parties must also stipulate periodic democratic elections for their principal officers, executive committee

members, or any other governing body. In addition, they must guarantee that the principle of 'federal character' is upheld in the composition of these entities, as specified in Section 223(1). This condition is only met if members of the governing bodies of political parties belong to different States, not being less than two-thirds of all the States in the country (222(b(b))). It is also stipulated that these intra-party elections should be held at regular intervals not exceeding four years.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is one of the Federal Executive Bodies established by the Constitution in the Third Schedule. The powers of the Commission include registering political parties, monitoring the organisation and operation of these parties, including their finances, and other provisions as may be contained in an Act enacted by the National Assembly. INEC also has the power to audit the finances of parties, conduct the registration of persons qualified to vote, maintain and update the voter register, monitor political campaigns, and provide rules and regulations to govern political parties. Critically, it is also responsible for organising and supervising all elections to the offices of the President and Vice President, the Governor and Deputy Governor of a State, and to the membership of the Senate, the House of Representatives, and the House of Assembly of each state of the Federation.

As stated in the Constitution, political parties must submit to INEC and the public a statement of their assets and liabilities, an annual statement, an analysis of their sources of funds, and their expenditure (Section 225(1-2)). Concerning their finances, parties are prohibited from holding any funds or other assets outside Nigeria and cannot retain any such funds and assets remitted from outside the country. Where such funds have been received, the said party is required to remit the funds or other assets to INEC within twenty-one days of their receipt (S.225(3)). Finally, political parties are prohibited from using or displaying physical force or coercion in promoting their objects and interests (S. 227).

The National Assembly is also conferred with powers to make laws that provide guidelines and rules to ensure internal party democracy within political parties. It also confers additional powers on INEC as it deems fit to promote internal party democracy. As such, issues relating to the formation and regulation of political parties are contained in the Exclusive List in the Second Schedule, Part 1 of the Constitution.

Pursuant to its powers to make laws to regulate the conduct of INEC and the administration of elections, the National Assembly repealed and re-enacted the Electoral Act, 2022, to regulate the conduct of Federal, State, and Area council elections in the Federal Capital Territory. Section 75 of the Act specifies the conditions that must be fulfilled for a party to be registered, including timely submission of application (not later than twelve months before a general election), constitutionally protected conditions, accurate and true information, etc. Political parties are required to maintain a register of their members in both hard and soft copy and make both available to INEC not

later than 30 days before the date fixed for party primaries, congresses, or conventions (S.77(3)). Section 79 outlines guidelines on symbols adopted by political parties that are expected to be distinctive from any other already registered, non-offensive or objectionable, not like Nigeria's or any other country's coat of arms, and not related to any tribe or ethnic group, religion, or cult, among others.

Procedures and requirements for the merger of political parties are specified in Section 81 of the Electoral Act, 2022. The scope and procedure for monitoring parties by INEC are contained in Section 83, while Section 84 (3) spells out the qualifications of aspirants and candidates. Specifically, parties are prohibited from imposing nomination qualification or disqualification criteria, measures, or conditions on any candidate for any election in their regulatory frameworks. The various types of primaries (direct, indirect, and consensus) and the procedures for each are explained in detail. Penalties for offences related to the finances of a political party and limitations on election expenses are outlined in Sections 85 and 88-90, respectively.

Finally, the Act prohibits certain conduct at political campaigns (Sections 92-97), including the use of abusive, intemperate, slanderous, or base language, or insinuations and innuendoes likely to provoke violent reactions or emotions. Equally prohibited is the use of places of religious worship and public offices for political activities, the keeping or use of armed private security organisations, and the use of force or violence during campaigns. Additionally, political broadcasts beyond the stipulated timeframe and campaigns based on religion or tribe are strictly forbidden.

In exercising the power delegated to it by the Constitution and the Electoral Act 2022 to make regulations for the conduct of elections, INEC produced a comprehensive guideline that regulated the 2023 general elections. The provisions include regulations on elections and arrangements for their conduct, accreditation and voting procedures, collation of results and making of returns, and the conduct of elections during COVID-19 and other health emergencies.

Guiding Principles and Ideology

In pursuing political positions to address national or state issues, political parties are compelled to present a convincing blueprint or ideology to the electorate. According to Olanrewaju (2015), political parties often rally around a specific ideology. This ideological framework helps unite individuals with shared political ideas, aids voters in understanding the party's stance on various issues and provides a framework for decision-making and governance. This entails a transparent exposition of the party's objectives and intentions and a strategic plan for achieving good governance. Party ideology is a set of beliefs, values, or ideas that form the foundation of a political party's vision or platform and guide a political party's policies and actions (Olanrewaju, 2015). He explains that political party ideology represents the guiding principles that shape the party's goals and policies. Party ideology serves as a roadmap for realising declared political goals when entrusted with political authority (Nnamdi and Ogan, 2019). Additionally, party ideology encompasses a political party's strategic approach to secure most votes required to assume control of governmental affairs.

Nnoli (2003, p.177-82) emphasises the critical role of ideology in politics. He describes it to understand society and make decisions. Furthermore, ideology is a potent instrument for conflict management, self-identification, popular mobilisation, and legitimisation. Consequently, it can be argued that, in an ideal scenario, a political party's ideological stance should be considered its primary and most crucial vehicle. Nnamdi and Ogan (2019) note that political ideology stands as a crucial element in political campaigns, serving to communicate the distinctive qualities of each political party, its comprehension of state or national issues, and its proposed solutions. This enables voters to evaluate each party against others, discerning the one with

the most authentic programmes for national progress. Writing about political ideology, Omotola (2009) emphasises its importance as a guide for decision-making, particularly when faced with multiple political options. Ideology is beneficial on an individual level, aiding in comprehending political questions and public political activities and enabling persuasive arguments to garner support for specific public policies (Omotola, 2009). Overall, ideology emerges as an indispensable element in politics. It is a significant instrument of state power and a political lifeline, influencing political judgements amid competing ideologies (Nnoli, 2003, p.181-83). Nnoli (2003) classifies ideology functions into several roles: interpreting society, guiding individual actions, managing

conflicts, integrating society, aiding self-identification, mobilising people, and enhancing political appeals for party distinctions. However, Nnoli also highlights the potential negative impacts of ideology, including its role as an impediment to national integration, a tool for suppressing the underprivileged, and a disguise for authoritarian rule (Nnoli, 2003, p.183). In examining the state of political ideology in Nigeria, the UNDP's 2013 report highlights the diminishing significance of the ideology question and the left-right divide within Nigerian political parties. Instead, conflicts now primarily revolve around personalities, ethnic affiliations, geopolitical considerations, and power dynamics. For example, the conflict between political godfathers and their protégés, as seen in Benue State, involving figures like Senator Akume and Fr. Alia, and the conflicts between Governor Wike and Fubara, vividly illustrate how internal party conflicts have shifted towards being more centred on individual personalities. These conflicts often revolve around power dynamics, personal ambitions, and the influence of key figures within the party rather than ideological differences or policy disagreements.

Shola (2015), UNDP (2013), and Omotola (2009) have lamented the absence of a robust political ideology within these parties. Furthermore, the Constitution mandates that political parties draw their manifestos from Chapter Two of the Constitution on Directive Principles of State Policy, which places a lot of obligation on the state to provide for the welfare of citizens. Party manifestos, however, elicit little interest or debate because the parties provide them to satisfy a constitutional obligation. For political party development, it is essential to bring issue-based politics back to the agenda (Omotola, 2009; Shola, 2015; UNDP, 2013). To buttress this point, the UNDP (2013) recalls the Second Republic, where parties like the UPN were known for their commitment to free education, the NPN for housing policies, and the PRP for opposing taxes on the peasantry. In contrast, contemporary parties struggle to associate themselves with specific issues. The report underscores a stark shift in the motivations driving political engagement in present-day Nigeria—focused more on the pursuit of power and financial gains than a genuine commitment to ideological principles or substantive issues.

Organisational Structure of Political Parties

This section presents literature on how Nigerian political parties operate internally, including internal democracy, membership dynamics, candidate selection, political party funding, and electoral campaign strategies.

■ Internal Party Processes and Democracy

The concept of internal party democracy, as defined by Omilusi (2016) and expanded upon by Godwin (2016), emphasises impersonal rules and procedures within political parties to prevent arbitrary control by individual

leaders or cliques. For genuine internal party democracy, these rules must exist on paper and be effectively implemented, requiring adherence to due process and accountability to both party members and established lawful organs. Okhaide (2012) adds that internal party democracy implies support for the general interests of members, emphasising participatory structures and democratic leadership.

Omilusi (2016) underscores the significant influence of intra-party democracy on democratic consolidation and representation. Internal organisational aspects, such as membership, recruitment, socialisation, training, discipline, and resource allocation, play a crucial role in shaping political outcomes. Factors like recruitment strategies, centralisation, party discipline, norms of cooperation, and political skills respond to external environmental factors. The absence of strong political parties may lead to opportunism and individual self-interest, posing a threat to nation-building and democracy. However, Omilusi (2016) notes challenges to internal party democracy, including insular management, a lack of leadership change, and the marginalisation of party members. These challenges can result in a small group dominating party affairs, hindering inclusiveness and preventing broader membership from influencing party policies.

In a study by Karu (2011) on the People's Democratic Party (PDP), a lack of internal democracy is identified, particularly in the flawed process of candidate selection and nominations. This deficit leads to internal conflicts, factionalisation, and the party's dominance by influential figures, termed 'godfathers.' Karu (2011) argues that institutional designs by themselves are insufficient to ensure a functional political party conducive to stable democratic governance.

To address internal party democracy challenges, Section 223 of the CFRN 1999 mandates political parties to reflect the federal character of Nigeria in their executive committees. Section 84(12) of the 2022 Electoral Act restricts political appointees from participating in party primaries, aiming to prevent undue influence. The combination of Sections 84(12) and (13) and effective political financing regulation can serve as a potent mechanism for strengthening internal party democracy in Nigeria, addressing issues related to the lack of internal democracy within political parties.

■ Party Membership and Candidate Selection

In Nigeria, political party membership is characterised by individuals functioning more as patrons or clients than as dedicated party members. The loyalty of these individuals is typically directed towards influential patrons or godfathers who provide financial support for their political engagement. This dynamic results in personal opportunities and financial gains, motivating individuals to maintain memberships in multiple political parties and actively participate in various party congresses. The primary driving force behind political involvement becomes the pursuit of patronage and benefits from influential figures, fostering a flexible and opportunistic adherence to political parties in the Nigerian political landscape.

UNDP (2013) posits that political party membership in Nigeria is transient, characterised by individuals participating more as clients than as committed party members. This underscores the notion that allegiance is primarily to influential patrons or godfathers who financially support their involvement, creating a scenario where individuals owe their political allegiance to these figures.

Political participation becomes mediated by patrons, especially during election periods, as they actively engage to secure nominations and elections for themselves or their proxies. In cases of failure, individuals may shift allegiance, leading to a flexible and opportunistic adherence to political parties in Nigeria. The pursuit of personal opportunities often drives individuals to hold multiple party cards, facilitating participation in various party congresses where participants are traditionally rewarded for their votes.

Karu (2011) emphasises that in emerging democracies, party membership can be induced by distributing state resources to citizens, acting as an incentive. Individuals are enticed to join political parties in anticipation of patronage and benefits from potential party candidates, including promises of government jobs, allocation of public contracts, or preferential consideration for welfare benefits. Such strategies contribute to the development of mass membership organisations and enhance grassroots support for political parties.

■ Political Party Funding

Political finance, as explained by various scholars such as Ujo (2000), Walecki (2002), and Karu (2011), encompasses the utilisation of funds for political activities, including election campaign funds and party expenditures. Joinbodi Cohort (2022) broadens this definition to include regular party activities and election campaign funding, highlighting the multifaceted ways in which the monetisation of politics shapes political outcomes, especially concerning foreign contributions. Pinto-Duschinsky (2004) revises his definition to incorporate party funds into political finance, recognising their support for activities beyond election campaigns. The 2022 Electoral Act, specifically Section 89(1), defines “election expenses” as the costs incurred by a political party from the Commission’s notice of election to polling day.

Similarly, candidate selection is the process through which political parties choose or nominate candidates for various party offices and general elections. This process, as highlighted by Karu (2011), exhibits variations among democracies and different party typologies. Political parties engage in selecting or nominating candidates for party offices at different levels and in general elections. Candidate nomination, or recruitment, is a crucial function of political parties. The methods employed in candidate selection, such as primaries, internal party elections, centralisation, and consensus, have profound implications for the behaviour of selected or elected candidates in both party and public offices. National laws, intra-party decision-making, and parties’ electoral fortunes influence the degree of democratisation in candidate selection procedures. Katz and Mair (1995) argue that comprehending a party’s candidate selection method provides insights into its internal functioning and the distribution of political power within a country.

Despite the critical role of financial resources in democracy, particularly in developing nations, political party funding has been overlooked, leading to funding scandals and corruption (Kura, 2011; Fisher and Eisenstadt, 2004). Studies (Bryan and Baer, 2005; Williams, 2000; Philip, 2001) highlight the increasing connection between corruption and political party funding. For example, Kura (2011) emphasises the potential for party funding to cause crises in Western democracies, citing corruption scandals in Western Europe (Hopkin, 2004). A study by Jensen and Justesen (2014) in sub-Saharan Africa shows that poorer voters are more likely to be targeted in vote-buying. Conversely, vote-buying encourages more people to participate in elections because they expect a reward (Vicente, 2014).

In Nigeria, elections face problems due to widespread political spending, mainly through vote-buying and compromising security agencies. The two major political parties in Nigeria, the PDP and APC, have been involved in various funding practices, taking advantage of their positions at the state and federal levels. This advantage allows them to gather funds from different sources, promoting a culture of money-driven politics. Accusations against these parties during the 2015 and 2019 elections include using substantial funds for campaigns, influencing voters, and paying law enforcement. Illegitimate funding sources include untraceable donations, misusing state resources, and using pseudo-political groups. Despite

legal restrictions, separate from mainstream campaigns, these groups actively supported the parties, significantly contributing to overall campaign spending, especially in creating campaign materials and branded products. In relation to the above, INEC (2005) warns of the dangers associated with uncontrolled money during elections, advocating regulations for transparency. Joinbodi Cohort (2022) critiques Nigeria's legal framework for inadequacies in addressing compliance and transparency in campaign finance. The Council for Europe (2003) outlines principles for financing political parties, emphasising a balance between public and private funding and transparency.

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, specifically Sections 222-229, establishes rules for political party operations, granting INEC powers to monitor campaign finances (Sections 225- 226). Section 228 provides sanctions, but the Constitution lacks explicit limits on campaign finance, necessitating further amendment. Section 222(2) mandates that parties submit annual statements to INEC. Sections 225, 226, and 228 delineate reporting requirements, restrictions on foreign funds, and INEC's oversight.

The 2022 Electoral Act supplements these provisions, addressing offences, reporting periods, contribution limits, and disclosure requirements. Sections 85 and 86 focus on party financing offences and account statement periods. Sections 87 and 88 restrict contributions

and set maximum limits on election expenses with penalties. Sections 89 and 90 cover election expense submission and the party’s obligation to disclose financial statements. Section 88(8) limits individual contributions to N50,000,000, and Sections 88(9)-(10) outline penalties for violations. Notably, Sections 88(1)-(7) of the 2022 Electoral Act establish spending limits on campaigns for political parties and candidates. For instance, the Act stipulates the maximum election expenses for presidential and governorship candidates as five billion naira and one billion naira, respectively. Similarly, spending limits for senatorial, House of Representatives, State House of Assembly, chairmanship of the area council, and councillor candidates are specified. The details are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Spending Limit for Election Expenses, according to the 2022 Electoral Act

S.No.	Elective Offices	Maximum election expenses
1	Presidential election	N5, 000, 000, 000
2	Governorship election	N1, 000, 000, 000
3	Senatorial election	N100, 000, 000
4	House of Representatives election	N70, 000, 000
5	State Assembly election	N30, 000, 000
6	Chairmanship election to Area Council	N30, 000, 000
7	Councillorship election to area council	N5, 000, 000

Source: Electoral Act, 2022

Despite these regulations, the Nigerian legal framework exhibits deficiencies, necessitating comprehensive disclosure, reporting, monitoring, and enforcement regulations to enhance transparency (Joinbodi Cohort, 2023).

■ Electoral Campaign and Strategy

Political parties play a pivotal role in Nigerian elections by implementing systematic strategies encompassing candidate selection, campaign management, mobilisation of members and supporters, and monitoring election polls. Albert (2017) emphasises the complexity of elections, highlighting campaigns as crucial components that establish a catalytic relationship between candidates and voters, influencing decisions based on values and presented issues.

The nexus between political parties and electioneering campaigns is vital in contemporary democracies, underscoring the indispensability of parties in selecting leaders.

Campaigns are purposeful efforts involving mass participation to achieve specific goals, such as winning elections (Albert, 2017). This includes political advocacy, lobbying, and communication, often utilising mass media and advertising. The Electoral

Act 2022 regulates political parties' awareness dissemination of manifestos and programmes during electoral campaigns. Ujo (2010) identifies five campaign methods, emphasising the diverse approaches political parties use in reaching out to the electorate. Gambo and Ribadu (2015) note that technological advancements, especially internet accessibility and social media networks like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, have transformed campaign strategies, enabling candidates to use online platforms for outreach. Peculiarities in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, such as candidates bearing campaign costs and the influence of political 'godfathers,' are discussed, along with corruption issues arising from post-election attempts to recoup investments. Gambo and Ribadu (2015) lament the abuse of state resources during campaigns and the unregulated use of money in Nigerian politics, insecurity as a prominent campaign agenda issue, and the use of ethnicity and religion in the electioneering process, which lead to the polarisation of the Nigerian state. In their examination of the impact of campaign propaganda on the 2015 Nigeria presidential election, Okolie, Enyiazu, and Nnamani (2021) highlight the crucial link between voter participation and the sophistication of communication channels used by candidates and political parties. Through a qualitative approach and rational choice theory, the study explores how ethno-religious messages from major political parties

influenced voter choices, contributed to the success of an opposition party, and shaped the policies of the winning party. The research underscores the manipulation of media by politicians to disseminate ethno-religious messages, impacting electoral outcomes and using the media as a tool for spreading controversial messages and slander against opponents. The role of such propaganda in the historic defeat of an incumbent in the 2015 election is acknowledged. The paper recommends expanding the roles of the Election Management Body, engaging in extensive political education, and strengthening democratic institutions.

The study defines campaign propaganda as a manipulative technique shaping and distributing information to sway voters' emotions and psyches. It emphasises the role of propaganda in modifying voter views and behaviours, creatively presenting party agendas, and encouraging electoral participation. While traditional media channels have been historically relied upon, the advent of ICT and the internet revolution have shifted information dissemination paradigms. New media tools have become significant influencers in determining election outcomes, as illustrated by examples from the United States and studies on political protests in other countries (Okolie, Enyiazu, and Nnamani, 2021).

FINDINGS

This section presents findings from the survey (questionnaires) and the in-depth interviews conducted with members of various parties. The study employed mixed-methods research, collecting data through oral interviews and survey questionnaires as stated in the methodology.

Response Rate

The response rate analysis in Table 4 shows that of the 360 questionnaires administered, 203 (56%) were completed and returned. This response rate is considered adequate and satisfactory because it surpasses the 50% threshold commonly used as a benchmark for survey research (Cooper and Schindler, 2009). A 50% response rate in a needs assessment study is considered adequate and satisfactory for multiple reasons. It guarantees statistical representativeness, increasing the probability that the sample accurately mirrors the entire population, thereby enhancing the reliability and applicability of the study findings. This response rate is essential for minimising nonresponse bias, ensuring that the results more accurately reflect the characteristics of the entire population.

Table 4: Response Rate

Category	Frequency	Per cent
Response	203 ● Osun (44), ● Kano (39), ● Bauchi (31), ● Katsina (30), ● Kogi (29), ● Bayelsa (15) ● Imo (15)	56
Non-Response	157	44
Total	360	100

Source: Fieldwork, July 2023.

In the same vein, of the 36 respondents targeted for the oral interview, 22 interviews were conducted with the officials of ADC (3), ADP (2), APM (2), BP (1), NRM (4), YPP (2), PDP (2), APC (2), Labour (2), as presented in Table 5.

Table 5: List of Respondents Interviewed

Party	Frequency
ADC	3
ADP	2
APM	2
BP	1
NRM	4
YPP	2
PDP	2
APC	2
Labour	2
SDP	1
Academia	1
Total	22

January 2024

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section describes the demographic background of the respondents to provide a background on their profile. The demographic data (age, gender, and political party affiliation) of the participants are presented below.

Gender of the Respondents

This section provides the gender distribution of the respondents. Table 6 shows the number and percentage of male and female respondents surveyed for the quantitative aspect of the study.

Table 6: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Male	167	82
Female	26	13
No Response	10	5
Total	203	100

Source: Field data, July 2023

The gender distribution of the respondents reveals that the male respondents constituted 167 (82%), while 26 (13%) were females, and 5% of respondents did not disclose their Gender. This indicates that most of the respondents in the study were male. Understandably, men constitute a larger percentage of party membership in Nigeria (Ake, Rasak, Olowojolu, Oye, and Ake, 2019).

Age of the Respondents

The age distribution of the respondents is captured in Table 7. The age range of the study was chosen to reflect the official representation of the population of Nigeria. According to the 2019 National Youth Policy, the youth population ranges from 18 to 29 years. The population

of older adults begins from the public service retirement age, which is 60 years, according to the National Policy on Ageing for Older Persons in Nigeria, 2021.

Table 7: Age Distribution of the Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentages (%)
18-29	5	2
30-39	40	20
40-49	62	31
50-59	51	25
60+	33	16
No Response	12	6
Total	203	100

Source: Field data, July 2023

The age range of the respondents reveals that while only 5 (2%) of the respondents were youths, according to the definition of the National Youth Policy, 2019, 33 (16%) fall under the category of older population, according to the National Policy on Ageing for Older Persons in Nigeria, 2021). These are characteristics of the practice in Nigeria, where youths are excluded from politics. The majority (62; 31%) of the respondents fall under the age range of 40 to 49 years, and 12 (6%) did not provide any response.

Political Party Affiliation

The political party affiliations of the respondents were also captured and presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Political Party Affiliation of Respondents

Political Party	Frequency
Action Democratic Party (ADP)	11
All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA)	18
Action Peoples Party (APP)	13
Labour Party (LP)	6
New Nigerian Peoples Party (NNPP)	4
Young Progressive Party (YPP)	6
Action Alliance (AA)	17
Social Democratic Party (SDP)	13
Peoples Redemption Party (PRP)	2
Boot Party (BP)	10
Zenith Labour Party (ZLP)	20
Accord (A)	15
All Progressive Party (APC)	4
African Action Congress (AAC)	18
People's Democratic Party (PDP)	1
Allied Peoples Movement (APM)	13
National Rescue Movement (NRM)	12
African Democratic Congress (ADC)	9
No Political Party Affiliation	2
No Response	9
Total	203

Source: Field data, July 2023

Table 8 shows the distribution of political party affiliations among the respondents. The highest number of respondents were from the Zenith Labour Party (ZLP), with 20 respondents, followed by 18 respondents each from the African Action Congress (AAC) and the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA). The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) was the least represented in the study, with only one respondent. Two respondents did not provide their political party affiliation, and nine failed to respond. It is important to note that the questionnaires were distributed equally among respondents, but not all completed and returned their questionnaires. Hence, the data captured in this study is based on the returned questionnaires.

Summary of Findings

The study finds that several legal and regulatory frameworks govern the political arena and the conduct of political parties. However, these were reported to be weak or inadequate, as evidenced by the overall weakness of political parties. Ethical guidelines for party leadership exist, but there is a lack of clarity in their development and implementation. Additionally, there is confusion regarding the definition and implementation of political party ideology, with some parties expressing ideological positions and others lacking defined ideologies. Organisational structures vary among parties, with disparities between national and local levels leading to coordination challenges. Mixed opinions were expressed concerning professionalism, internal processes, and democracy within parties.

Furthermore, communication between party leadership and members exists in several political parties but is generally considered inadequate. Study participants also reported that internal and external communication and media access challenges persist. Funding remains a significant challenge and impacts political parties' electoral competitiveness. The study also finds that engagement in inter-party dialogue varies among parties, hindered by differences in interests and the dominance of larger parties.

Other findings include that membership processes are challenged by record-keeping and integrity, and there are inadequate strategies for reaching new members and recruiting women and youth. In the legislature, smaller parties struggle with coordination due to frequent party-switching. Capacity-building opportunities are limited, and transparency in party finances varies across political parties. Lastly, there were challenges in campaign strategies, candidate recruitment, and monitoring polling places during elections.

Constitutional and Regulatory Framework

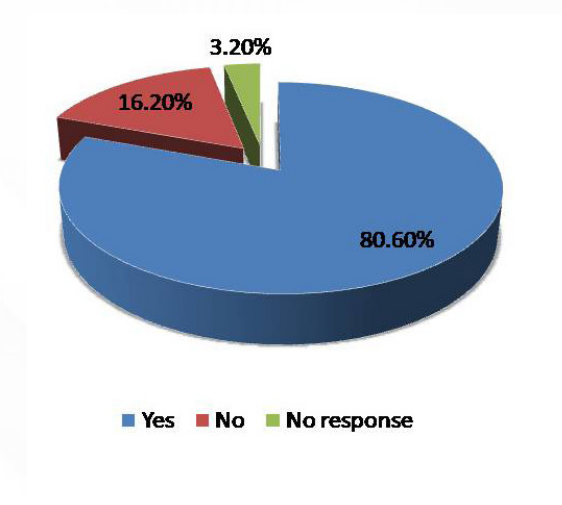
Nigeria's political landscape is underpinned by a strong constitutional and regulatory framework governing political parties, detailed in the 1999 Constitution and the 2023 Electoral Act, complemented by INEC guidelines. This reflects the nation's dedication to fairness, transparency, and broad political participation. INEC, as a Federal Executive Body, plays a pivotal role in party registration, operations oversight, and financial transparency. The National Assembly contributes to internal party democracy by legislating guidelines and empowering INEC to uphold democratic principles. The amended Electoral Act of 2022 introduces crucial regulations, emphasising financial probity and addressing

party conduct, interactions, and penalties for offences. It also regulates political campaigns, encouraging civil discourse and discouraging abusive language and force. The Act covers election expenses, candidate qualifications, and intricate party primary processes. INEC's 2023 election guidelines provide a comprehensive framework for shaping Nigeria's political environment. The subsequent section will explore respondents' familiarity with and the robustness of these frameworks and ethical guidelines for political party leadership, along with their views on the necessity of separate legislation for regulating political parties.

Familiarity with and Robustness of the Frameworks Governing Political Parties

Political parties in Nigeria are regulated by the 1999 Constitution, the Electoral Act 2023, and other guidelines and regulations developed by INEC. However, the awareness of the regulatory and institutional frameworks governing political parties in Nigeria differed considerably between interviewees at the national and sub-national levels. While 80.6% of the interviewees indicated knowledge of the major frameworks, 16.2% were unaware of the major frameworks, and 3.2% did not respond. This indicates that some members of political parties in Nigeria are not aware of the regulatory and institutional frameworks governing political parties in Nigeria.

Figure 1: Respondents' familiarity with the Constitution and the Robustness of the frameworks Governing political parties in Nigeria



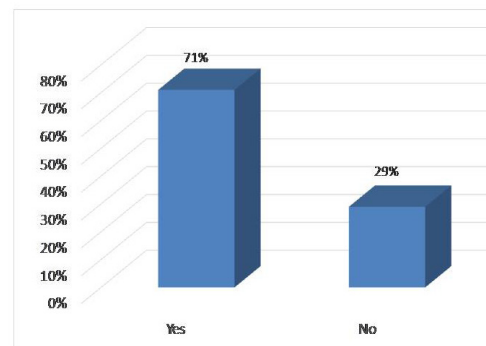
Interviewees expressed knowledge of the frameworks but generally believed that the legal and normative regulations overseeing political parties in Nigeria are insufficient. This sentiment was consistently echoed across various parties during interviews. Many interviewees perceived the reduction in the number of political parties as a positive indicator of success. They commended constitutional and electoral amendments for addressing emerging challenges. Despite this, some interviewees pointed out that the stringent requirements for party registration create difficulties, fostering the influence of 'godfathers' and 'moneybags'.

Conversely, some voiced a different perspective, asserting that the regulatory and institutional frameworks exhibit weaknesses. Critics argue that the criteria for establishing new political parties, particularly the requirement of a presence in at least 24 states, is vulnerable to manipulation through deceptive arrangements. According to some interviewees, the existence of numerous non-viable political parties reflects the inadequacies of the current framework. To address this, they suggested more thorough verification by INEC of information provided by aspiring parties, coupled with stricter prerequisites. Other recommendations include regular INEC-led verifications and audits of political parties to assess their financial health and viability. The prevailing opinion among respondents is that INEC has not been as diligent in fulfilling these responsibilities as it should be.

However, others took a contrary position, stating that the regulatory and institutional frameworks are weak, making it difficult, especially for young people wishing to register a new party. This has led to the growing influence of 'godfathers' and 'moneybags' who exert

extreme dominance and control over parties. In this regard, some interviewees recommended stricter legislation to regulate party management, including funding to limit the influence of wealthy individuals. This position aligns with existing literature. Joinbodi Cohort's (2022) research highlights the inadequacy of Nigeria's legislative framework in ensuring compliance and transparency in campaign funding. The study advocates for comprehensive laws addressing disclosure, reporting, monitoring, and enforcement. Furthermore, while 71% of those surveyed strongly agree that separate legislation (e.g., Malawi's Political Parties Act, 2018) should be enacted to regulate political parties in Nigeria, 29% disagree.

Figure 2: Respondents' view on the need for separate independent legislations to regulate political parties



Views on the status of INEC as the electoral management body and its extensive powers differed considerably. Some interviewees characterised the Commission as unwieldy, too powerful, and not fit for purpose given the size of Nigeria. Hence, they argued for an unbundling of the Commission to enable it to focus solely on conducting elections. They suggested that some of its other functions, such as political party registration and governance and the prosecution of electoral offences, should be assigned to other bodies:

“The only thing I see and want to recommend is for INEC to be unbundled. I feel the job of registering political parties, managing political parties, and running elections is a cumbersome task for just INEC to handle, and there should be another separate body saddled with the responsibility of registering, regulating, and managing a political party. However, INEC has been doing a good job so far...”

On the contrary, some interviewees disagreed and argued that the Commission should be reformed internally to make it more effective. They suggested creating additional departments and units with quasi-independent powers for greater synergy and efficiency. Despite differing opinions on the status of INEC, the common implication is dissatisfaction with its performance as the country’s election management body. Considering the high cost of governance and ongoing efforts to implement the Orosanya Report on rationalising government agencies, internal reform seems a more favourable option. An aspect of this involves restructuring INEC internally by establishing additional departments and units with quasi-independent powers, aiming to enhance synergy and efficiency. The objective is to avoid the creation of new agencies to handle INEC’s diverse responsibilities.

Freedom of Speech

Interviewees acknowledged that freedom of speech is a constitutional right. Section 39(1) of the 1999 Constitution states, “every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference.” However, interviewees in this study stated that this right is not absolute and does not cover gratuitous insults, hate speech, or actions that disturb public safety and order. Also, despite the constitutional guarantee for freedom of speech, interviewees pointed to increasing censorship by government authorities and sometimes intimidation and arrest for political views aired.

The implication is that while there is constitutional recognition and protection of freedom of speech, there is a limit to this right, as it does not cover gratuitous insults, hate speech, or actions that

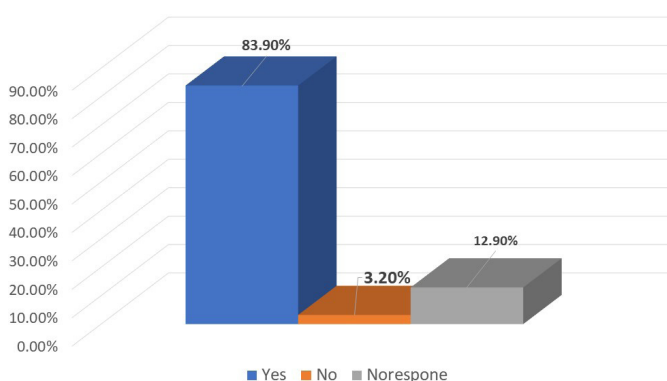
disrupt public safety and order. Hence, there is a need to exercise caution in communication strategies and public statements, avoiding content that falls outside the bounds of protected speech to avoid censorship, arrest, or intimidation by government authorities.

The Constitution requires all political parties to have a written constitution. In this study, a total of 16 constitutions were reviewed³. Typically, the various articles cover administrative issues such as the party’s motto, slogan, offices, administrative organs, tenure, discipline, conduct of meetings, etc. They also outline the party’s logo, flag, ethical commitment, objectives and philosophy, conditions for membership, organs of the party and their powers and functions, mode of elections into party offices, party finances, bank accounts, etc.

3 Accord, AA, ADC, ADP, APC, APGA, APM, APP, BP, LP, NNPP, NRM, PDP, PRP, SDP and YPP

According to the chart, **83.9%** of the interviewees agreed that there are ethical guidelines for party leadership, 3.2% disagreed, and 12.9% did not respond, as shown below. Many of the constitutions of the various political parties contain sections or schedules on the ethical commitments of the party and code of conduct (Acord, NNPP, ADP, PDP, PRP, YPP). The PDP constitution has an additional section on the character and ethics of the party, while Annexe 1 of the Boot Party’s constitution contains an elaborate code of conduct. Other party constitutions do not contain an explicit code of ethics or conduct (APC, NRM, SDP).

Figure 3: Respondents’ knowledge of ethical guidelines for party leadership



The constitutions of many parties (APC, APM, and APGA) state that the responsibility of the Board of Trustees (BOT) is to draw up a code of conduct for its members and public/party office holders (section 13.2(A)(viii)). However, it is not clear if any such document has been developed. Other parties (APGA, LP) have a brief section on the code of conduct at elections.

The data indicates that many political parties have incorporated ethical considerations into their constitutions, as evidenced by the high percentage (83.9%) of respondents recognising the existence of ethical guidelines for party leadership. However, the lack of clarity regarding the development of a formal code of conduct document for members and party officers raises concerns about implementing these provisions. Parties like the APGA and LP exhibit a specific focus on ethical behaviour during elections through brief sections in their constitutions. The overall conclusion is that while ethical guidelines are acknowledged, there is a need for greater clarity, consistent implementation, and potentially more explicit provisions, particularly in parties lacking well-defined codes of conduct.

Regarding the adequacy of constitutions, interviewees generally consider the various constitutions of the parties to be sufficient and robust enough to regulate political parties. They, however, recommend periodic revisions involving all levels of membership. NRM, APC, and APM report one or more internal reviews of their constitutions by the party and its experts. NRM stated that a 2019 review of political party constitutions in Nigeria named the party one of five with robust frameworks. However, the report of the purported assessment has not been assessed in this study.

Similarly, APC respondents reported that the party constitution was reviewed in 2022. Other interviewees pointed to the lack of depth in some political party constitutions. These constitutions appear largely plagiarised or adapted from existing documents and online resources. A few noted that party constitutions are sometimes disregarded or deliberately written to favour some individuals to remain in leadership positions almost perpetually.

In conclusion, the data reveals a mixed perspective on the adequacy and robustness of political party constitutions for regulating political activities. While some consider these documents suitable, concerns arise about their depth. Some parties conduct periodic reviews for strong frameworks, but criticism exists for others accused of lacking depth or being manipulated for personal interests. This underscores the need for regular and thorough reviews and measures to ensure sincerity and effectiveness in regulating party affairs through constitutions.

Guiding Principles and Ideologies of Political Parties

This analysis examines the guiding principles and ideologies of political parties in Nigeria. It aims to determine the extent to which political parties in Nigeria have coherent ideologies and how these ideologies are developed and implemented. According to the survey results, 90.3% of respondents stated that their party has an ideological position. This indicates that most political parties in Nigeria claim to have a coherent ideology. However, it is important to note that 6.5% of respondents disagree with this statement, suggesting some disagreement or confusion within a few parties regarding their ideological positions.

Additionally, 3.2% of respondents did not respond. These findings highlight

the need for further investigation into developing and implementing party ideologies in Nigeria. The findings of this analysis contradict previous literature on the topic, which has criticised the lack of robust political ideologies within Nigerian political parties. For example, Shola (2015), UNDP (2013), and Omotola (2009) have criticised the lack of a robust political ideology within Nigerian political parties. They stress the significance of reintroducing issue-based politics into the agenda as a vital measure for improving political party development.

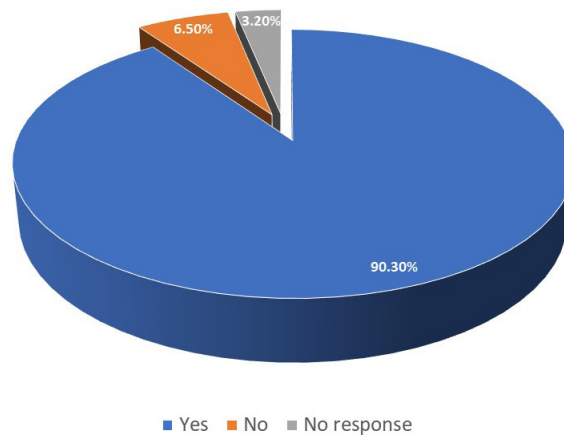
However, when asked to state the party's ideology or political philosophy, many respondents could not provide a clear answer. Instead, they pointed to the party's logo, constitution, publications,

etc. Hence, those who claim their political parties have ideologies may be confusing ideology with political philosophy. It is important to note that ideology refers to beliefs, values, and principles guiding a political party's policies and actions. Political philosophy, on the other hand, refers to a broader framework of ideas and theories about the nature of politics and governance.

Furthermore, when asked if there was a systematic process for developing, refining, and implementing party ideologies, some interviewees stated that no such process existed in their

parties. Most interviewees were unaware of how the party's initial ideologies were developed. In some cases, interviewees noted that the party's ideology was crafted by its founding fathers at the point of registration. A few interviewees participated in developing the ideologies of their respective parties (ADP). They described the process as open and consultative. The unclear process and diverse nature of expressing ideologies in party constitutions suggest the need for a more organised method in developing ideologies and a clear definition of party values.

Figure 4: Respondents' views on whether their party have an ideological position



Whereas the constitutions of some political parties have a clearly defined philosophy or ideology, others refer to the party's purpose and core values, aims, objectives, and principles. The latter sometimes contains some form of philosophical articulation. More so, some parties formulate their aims and objectives based on the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy contained in Chapter II of the 1999 Constitution. Some of the philosophical iterations contained in some party constitutions are shown below.

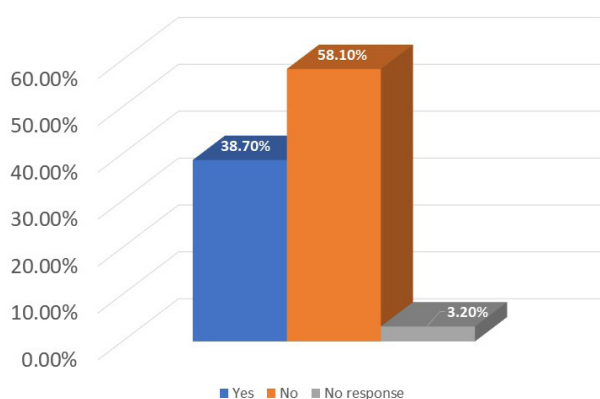
Table 9: Political Party Ideologies as contained in their constitutions

	Party	Ideology	Source
1	Accord (A)	Welfarism	The party philosophy is defined as welfarism (Article 10)
2	Action Alliance (AA)	Equity for National Development	The principle of the Party shall be Equity for National Development in conformity with the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy as enshrined in the Constitution (Article 7)
3	African Democratic Congress (ADC)	Humanism, Welfarism, Rule of Law, Justice, Equity	Article 7 is on the party's purpose, aims and principles. However, these are not clearly stated. Instead, the constitution provides that resolutions shall be passed at a policy session at intervals. References are sometimes made to Pan-Africanism as a guiding principle.
4	Action Democratic Party (ADP)	Social Capitalism, Liberty, Equality, Justice	Article 5 states the aims and objectives of the party, while Articles 7 and 8 outline the drives and aspirations of the party and its fundamental guiding principles, respectively
5	All Progressives Congress, APC	No clear provisions on ideology or philosophy	No clear provisions on ideology or philosophy in the constitution, but Article 7 states the aims and objectives
6	All Progressives Grand Alliance, APGA	Nationalism, Progressivism, Decentralisation	Article 6 outlines the broad aims and objectives of the party, while Art. 11(2)(n) states the role of the National Executive Committee (NEC) in formulating party actions, policies, and programmes. The broad philosophical positions in its documents include nationalism, progressivism and decentralisation.
7	Allied Peoples Movement (APM)	Aims and objectives not clearly defined	Article 4 states the party's aims and objectives. Several sections of the constitution refer to the party ideology, but this is not defined anywhere in the document.
8	Action Peoples Party (APP)	Federalism, Democracy, Integration	The aims and objectives of the Party are stated in Chapter 4, while the preamble lists the values of federalism, democracy, and integration.
9	Boat Party (BP)	Aims and objectives listed	the aims and objectives of the Party are listed under Article 6
10	Labour Party (LP)	Social Democracy	the preamble to the constitution identifies adherents of the Party as social democrats consisting of the working class, farmers, professionals, intellectuals, etc.
11	New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP)	Democratic Liberalism	The ideology of the is defined as democratic liberalism in the preamble
12	National Rescue Movement (NRM)	Based on Chapter II of the 1999 Constitution	There is no distinctive ideological position except that the aims and objectives of the party shall be framed based on Chapter II of the 1999 Constitution
13	People's Democratic Party (PDP)	Social Conservatism, Economic Liberalism	The preamble outlines the history and broad aims of the party following long years of military rule. Its aims and objectives are also to conform to Chapter II of the Constitution. Other documents describe its philosophy as social conservatism and economic liberalism.
14	People's Redemption Party (PRP)	Socialism	One of the party's fundamental principles is socialism, which emphasises building a prosperous and self-reliant national economy based on just social relations of production and exchange, among others.
15	Social Democratic Party (SDP)	Social Democracy	Article 7 of the party's constitution is on philosophy, aims and objectives. The party is said to ascribe to social democracy, but its constitution has limited coherent articulation of this ideology. There is, however, an exhaustive list of objectives and programmes.
16	Young Progressive Party (YPP)	Social Liberalism	Article 8 focuses on the aims and objectives of the party
17	Zenith Labour Party (ZLP)	Social Democracy	
18	African Action Congress (AAC)		The aims of the party...shall be to conform with the fundamental objectives and directive principles of State Policy as contained in Chapter II of the Constitution of Nigeria

Source: Various Sources, including Party Constitutions and Websites

A few interviewees noted that parties do not always have defined and explicit ideologies, and even where they exist, party policies and positions are not necessarily influenced by that ideology. This corresponds with results from the survey, which show that only 38.7% believe that their political party has lived up to its founding principles, while 58.1% think otherwise. 3.20% did not respond. Some interviewees from the PDP expressed satisfaction with the PDP's consistency and adherence to its founding ideology.

Figure 5: Respondents' views on whether their party have lived up to its founding principles



Several respondents emphasised the limited influence of ideology in party politics. They cited the fluidity in party membership, where people easily move from one party to another to secure a ticket to contest elections. This also affects the policy development capacity of a party. These interviewees noted that there is little difference in the content of the manifestos of the various parties, which largely contain a 'shopping list' of sectoral programmes rather than a coherent ideology.

Respondents from the ADC maintained that the party's ideological position is based on humanism, welfarism, the rule of law, justice, and equality for all. These principles influence the party's manifesto, policies, and frameworks. It is important to note that the ADC is known for its focus on social justice and inclusivity, which aligns with the party's

ideological position. However, a few respondents from the ADC expressed that the party's main goal was promoting the nation's well-being.

Similarly, interviewees from the ADP stated that the party's philosophy is social capitalism, which considers not only economic resources but also other forms of capital, such as liberty, equality, and justice. This reflects the party's commitment to inclusive and sustainable development.

Those interviewed in APM pointed to the party's logo, which is taken to signify the party's ideology. The choice of cassava, a Nigerian staple, symbolises a focus on agriculture and industrialisation. It also represents the party's affinity to the masses and promotes inclusion. Its motto is 'integrity, sacrifice, and service'.

For respondents in the YPP, the party's ideological position is social liberalism, which promotes the market but is not unregulated. It also seeks to promote the civil and political rights of all Nigerians. The party's vision is to build an egalitarian society with citizens as the primary resource.

Respondents from the PDP elaborated on the party's ideology as pro-business and pro-people. Thus, they describe the party's ideology as nationalism. The party seeks to leverage private sector expertise to solve public sector issues. The government should provide the environment for the private sector to thrive while making adequate provisions to provide for and protect the livelihoods and interests of the poor. Hence, the

slogan “power to the people”. Members highlighted the party’s influence on all aspects of national life and other political parties. According to interviewees from the APC, the party defines itself as progressive with a people-oriented vision.

The analysis indicates a diverse landscape of political party ideologies in Nigeria. Some parties lack clear ideologies, and even when present, they may not strongly influence

policies, leading to dissatisfaction with parties adhering to founding principles. Parties like ADC and ADP have specific ideologies (humanism, welfarism, social capitalism), while others, like APM, symbolise their focus through logos. PDP emphasises a pro-business, pro-people ideology with a nationalist approach, while APC identifies as progressive with a people-oriented vision. Overall, political parties have a varied awareness of ideologies and policy focuses.

Key Political Issues for the Party (Current and Future)

Respondents and interviewees reflected on the key political issues of importance to their party. The ADC is faced with the challenge of good leadership and internal cohesion. It was forced to expel its presidential candidate after determining that the candidate was disruptive and not keen on properly representing its interests. Some interviewees frowned at the use of the ‘placeholder’ provision to abuse the system and foster the selfish interests of politicians. Others consider the party leadership structure defective.

The key political issues of interest to the ADP are education and development. The party seeks to transform Nigeria through the fifth industrial revolution, based on sustainability and a focus on the human person. Accordingly, the party is forward-looking in its policy development. The mismanagement of the oil and gas sector was highlighted, as was the need to use Nigeria’s abundant natural resources to benefit the people. The party is also interested in diversifying the economy and developing Nigeria’s agricultural potential by providing inputs and related support to smallholders. Equally important to the party is unity, and hence, the focus is on fighting negative

manifestations of ethnicity and religious hatred.

Some of the political issues highlighted by APM include free, fair and transparent elections, a judiciary that is independent and impartial, and political offices as a service where political power serves the people rather than leaders.

The Boot Party emphasises the need for strengthening the independence of the three arms of government while promoting synergy to foster national development. The NRM highlighted the rise in money politics, which has retarded political growth. Others mentioned that the party has a ‘rescue agenda’ that addresses issues such as unemployment and poverty and promotes the rule of law, fairness, equity, justice, and service to the people.

For YPP, the leadership challenge is identified as the most pressing political issue concerning the party. They consider leadership to be an essential requirement for Nigeria to transition to a developed nation. Other issues identified by interviewees from the party include revisiting the Electoral Act 2022 considering the outcomes of the 2023 elections to identify and remedy any defects and build voter confidence, which has diminished considerably. The state of the economy is also of concern to the party, particularly the fiscal and monetary policies of the government and how they affect ordinary citizens. Diversification of the economy away from oil is equally stressed.

Interviewees from the PDP pointed to the deficit in corporate governance and accountability on the part of political parties, which sometimes results in the mismanagement of available resources. Other issues of interest to the party include improving the welfare of Nigerians because of growing poverty, inequality, and economic hardships, as well as deepening democracy. Some of the challenges in the region and their effects on Nigeria were also highlighted, including democratic reversals, the

presence of international non-state actors, and security challenges posed by extremist groups. It is also interested in strengthening its internal processes for candidate selection.

Respondents from APC highlighted insecurity and its effects on people's livelihoods, the effects of the fuel subsidy removal on poor Nigerians, rising inflation, and the floating of the naira, which has negatively affected the economy.

Main Policy Positions of the Party

Respondents from the different parties discussed what they considered the main policy positions of their party. For NRM, the emphasis is on good governance, shared prosperity, and national integration. Those in ADC noted that the party has prioritised gender issues and is committed to increasing the number of women holding positions in the party executive branch beyond the traditional 'woman leader'. Other priority groups include young people and people with disabilities (PWDs). This is considered a successful strategy for encouraging women and youth to join the party. For instance, of the more than 1,500 candidates that contested under the party's platform in the 2023 general elections, over 500 were youths and women. In view of the high rates of unemployment, the party has also identified job creation as an important area of interest. The party considers itself a party of professionals, with many qualified practitioners in different fields as members. The party also emphasises the values of good leadership and discipline. APM considers the education sector as key to its reform agenda and hence the need to invest in reforming it.

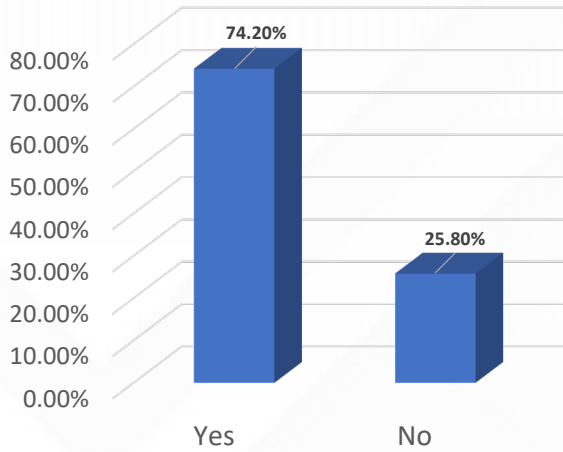
Organisational Structure of Political Parties

a. General

This section examines the adequacy of party structures across all levels as specified in the respective constitutions and the relationship between the party and these structures. Additionally, members were asked to reflect on the party's activities before, during, and after the elections. Most interviewees stated that their political party has structures at all levels (national, state, and local) as mandated by the 1999 Constitution and INEC guidelines. However, some respondents pointed out that not all-party organs are properly constituted, such as the unformed Advisory Board of the APC. This absence in some political parties can lead to organisational gaps marked by unclear structures and poor coordination. Consequently, it may fuel conflicts and power struggles, weakening overall cohesion and exposing the party to external vulnerabilities.

Regarding professionalism, opinions are mixed, with 74.2% agreeing their party operates professionally and 25.8% of respondents disagreeing. This suggests a need for critical evaluation and improvements to build trust and credibility for political parties.

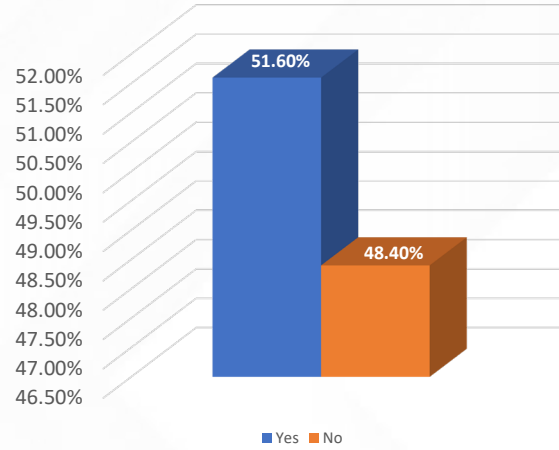
Figure 6: Respondents' views on whether their party is operated professionally



More so, the results indicate a split view on the adequacy of party infrastructure, with 51.6% stating that their party has sufficient provision for offices across all levels of its operations, while 48.4% disagree. The latter position was corroborated in the interviews, where some respondents noted that not all parties have offices across the 36 states and 768 Local Government Areas (LGAs ³⁴). Also, in some instances, party structures at the local level are not always as well developed as those at the national level. This suggests a potential challenge in achieving comprehensive geographical representation, as some parties may lack offices in all states and local government areas. The disparities between well-developed national structures and less-developed local structures underscore the importance of addressing these imbalances for enhanced effectiveness and inclusivity in party operations.

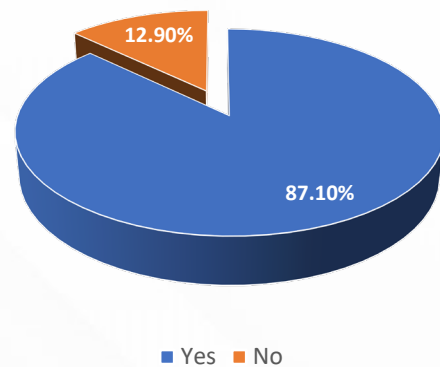
2. Chapter 1, Par 1(3)(6)

Figure 7: Respondents' views on whether their party have sufficient offices



The figure below shows that 87.1% of those surveyed state that their party has a competent and enough staff at the national, regional, and local levels, while 12.9% state otherwise. It indicates that most of the surveyed political parties have adequate staff for effective party management at the national, regional, and local levels. However, this may not be the case for smaller political parties that are not widely spread across the entire length and breadth of Nigeria.

Figure 8: Respondents' views on whether their party have competent and enough staff at the national, regional and local levels



Furthermore, the management of party secretariats and offices plays a crucial role in the overall effectiveness and functionality of political parties. These structures are central hubs for party activities, coordination, and communication. Most interviewees highlighted that parties are doing their best to manage secretariats and other offices to meet the party's objectives given available resources. However, a few respondents expressed concerns about the inadequate management of these structures, attributing it to financial limitations. This implies that parties need to explore sustainable funding strategies to ensure effective functioning and optimal management of party

secretariats and offices. Addressing financial constraints is crucial for enhancing the overall effectiveness of political parties in fulfilling their objectives.

Interviewees attest to regular communication and meetings between the party headquarters, the state and local branches, and between the party and INEC. Various communication channels are adopted by parties, including physical meetings and electronic media resources such as Zoom. The Boot Party has recently organised a conference in Abuja to bring together the national and state executives and members. However, some interviewees have noted that the interface between the headquarters and other levels is inadequate due to various factors, including limited resources. The use of online platforms, such as social media and video conferencing, to communicate between different party levels is increasing. Most interviewees acknowledge that party structures are mostly active during elections, but activities tend to slow down or halt after elections. This further reinforces the point that political parties are mostly used as platforms to seek office, and there is limited investment in building or

strengthening party structures beyond this objective. Some examples of politicians using one party to gain power and then decamping shortly after winning elections were given.

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“In ADC, for instance, in the 2019 election, we won some seats in the House of Representatives and even in the State Houses of Assembly. Sadly, most defected to other political parties, leaving only one man standing, Hon. Elder J.K Abajide, from Yagba federal constituency in Kogi state.”

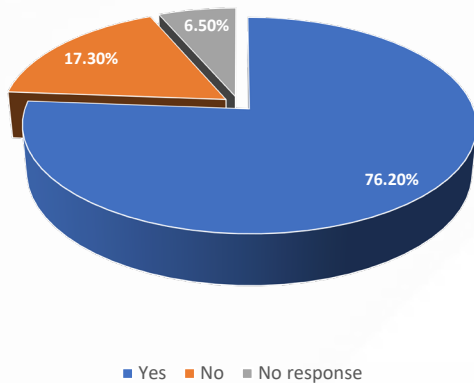
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The results imply that despite regular communication and meetings at different party levels, there are concerns about the inadequacy of the interface between headquarters and other levels, often due to limited resources. The increasing use of online platforms for communication, including social media and video conferencing, indicates a growing reliance on digital channels among some political parties. Moreover, while political parties show commitment to coordination during election periods, the observed trend of heightened activity followed by a slowdown afterwards suggests a perception that parties are primarily used as platforms to seek office. The examples of politicians switching parties shortly after winning elections underscore the need for a deeper commitment to party loyalty and ideology beyond electoral cycles. Lastly, financial constraints impact the effectiveness of communication channels, emphasising the importance of parties investing in robust communication strategies.

b. Internal Party Processes

Several questions were asked about internal party processes, including the formal structure for policy development and if the process is inclusive. Figure 9 shows that 76.2% of those surveyed affirm that there is a formal structure(s) for policy development in their party, 17.3% noted no such structure, and 6.5% offered no response. This position is confirmed in the interviews, where some interviewees said they could not identify the policy development structure of the party. Furthermore, the interviewees could not identify the party's designated policy offices and officers.

Figure 9: Respondents' views on whether their party have a formal structure(s) for policy development



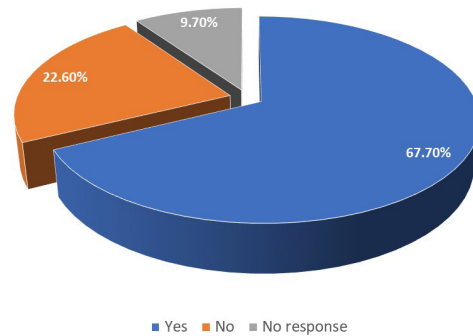
However, some parties (e.g., ADC, ADP) claim to have formal, independent, well-articulated, inclusive structures and critical processes for policy development. Others (NRM) acknowledged that the process could be further strengthened to ensure synergy between national and sub-national structures in policy development.

Suffice it to state that several party constitutions vest the role of policy articulation with the NEC. Interviewees from the ADC re-emphasised the role of leadership and hierarchy of the party in

policy development. Interviewees from the party stated that proposed new policies are discussed by the National Working Committee, the party's highest policymaking body, and the National Executive Committee (NEC), which is the party's national executive council composed mainly of state chairmen. These organs of the party deliberate policy enunciations and proposals and outcomes are communicated to members through newsletters, flyers, etc.

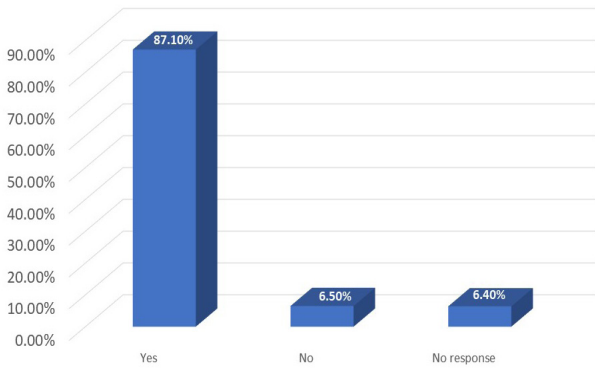
Data from the survey show that 67.7% of the respondents agree that ordinary members of the party have access to the party's policy-making structures (NWC, NEC, etc.). In comparison, 22.6% do not think that these structures are accessible.

Figure 10: Respondents' knowledge of whether ordinary party members have access to these structures



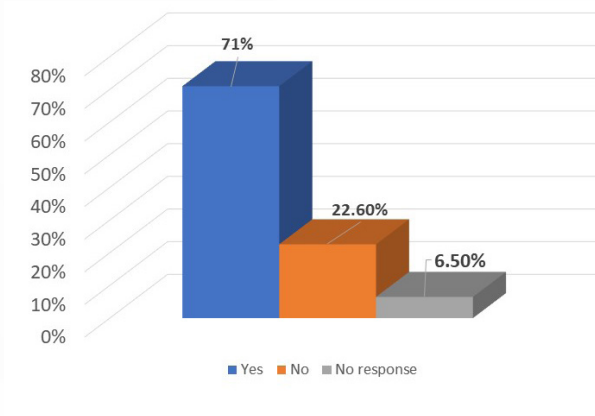
Additionally, several interviewees could not determine if the party's policy-making process is inclusive, involving state and local levels of the party. This conforms with data from those surveyed, where 87.1% stated that regional and local branches play a role in developing policy documents for their party. However, 6.5% did not believe that other levels of the party were involved in developing policy positions and party documents, while another 6.4% declined to respond.

Figure 11: Respondents' belief of whether regional and local branches play a role in developing policy documents



Some of those interviewed confirmed that the party policy development process is inclusive. For example, respondents from the ADC noted that policies are developed based on inputs from the grassroots and across all levels. Also, YPP ensures that all its committees are inclusive of women, youths, and PWDs. The PDP also states that it has internal guidelines requiring that PWDs be included in party executive committees. Data from the survey show that while 71% of the respondents agree that policy documents are distributed broadly and reviewed by members, 22.6% disagreed, and 6.5% provided no response.

Figure 12: Respondents' views on whether policy documents are broadly distributed and reviewed by members



Nature of Decision-Making in the Party (Participatory or Not)

Most interviewees agree that decision-making is participatory in parties, and there is a requirement for regular meetings to discuss party issues. Despite this, some say the decision-making process is sometimes not participatory, and only the party hierarchy or powerful individuals make decisions.

Whereas some parties do not adequately involve women and youths in the decision-making process other than what is statutorily provided (e.g., the position of women and youth leaders), other parties prioritise women and youths in the decision-making process. For instance, ADC considers youths and women to be central to the success of the matter. Out of the twelve presidential contestants on the party's platform in 2023, five were women. Also, the former BOT chairman was a woman. The party has equally zoned some positions for youths across geopolitical zones. YPP states that seventy per cent of the members of its NEC are women, including the National Deputy Chairman, the National Welfare Adviser, and the National Woman Leader. Others are the Deputy Welfare Adviser and the Deputy Legal Adviser.

To encourage participation by women, youths, and PWDs, some parties (ADC, ADP, APM, PDP) give nomination forms at no cost or subsidised rates. In 2023, the PDP gave free registration forms to women candidates and charged 10% of the cost of expression of interest forms. Despite this, those interviewed noted that women's participation had remained poor. They blamed other factors such as social stigmatisation, lack of financial capacity, heightened gender-based violence, socio-cultural and religious factors, and marital duties.

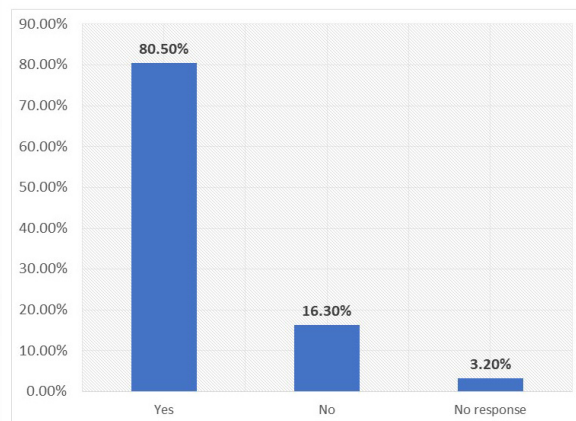
NRM held a National Youth Summit to ensure they were mainstreamed into party processes. In addition, it launched a 'Young National Rescue Mission' targeting young people, while YPP has a scholarship programme and has assisted indigent students in purchasing JAMB forms. It has created the position of a director specifically for PWDs. Some parties have promoted more women in leadership positions; the ADP's national vice chairman and vice-chairman for the south and north are also women. Also, the party encouraged gubernatorial candidates to pick women as their running mates. APM has women as chairpersons in six states, and three out of the six geo-political zones have women as vice chairmen, including the north-east, north central, and north-west.

C. Internal Party Democracy

Internal party democracy is critical to the overall health of a country's democracy. Political parties must operate in line with the existing government laws and frameworks and normative frameworks and guidelines. The internal leadership selection process is contained in the constitutions of the various parties, as well as guidelines for the congresses and conventions, which are meant to be held periodically (usually every four years). While 80.5% of interviewees believe that the internal leadership selection process is adequate and that the policies, procedures, and rules for holding regular elections are clear, 16.3% disagree, and 3.2% do not respond. Most interviewees agree that there is generally widespread adherence to these policies, procedures, and rules. They also assert that elections for party positions are predominantly characterised by freedom, fairness, and transparency. Where members are unsatisfied with the process, they can appeal through the internal structures provided by the party, but ultimately, they can seek legal remedies. All party positions are distributed to conform to

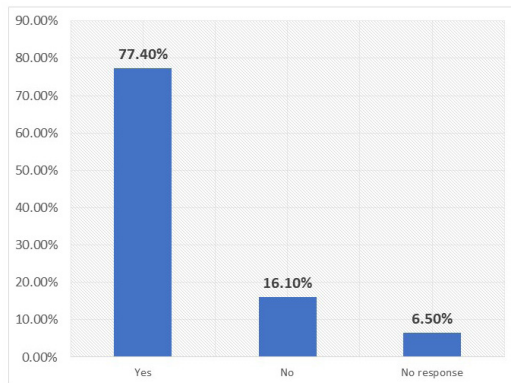
the federal character and according to geo-political zones. In some instances (Boot), leadership selection is said to be merit-based, which involves interviews in some instances (YPP).

Figure 13: Respondent's views that their party has clear policies, procedures and rules for holding regular elections to party leadership and selecting candidates



However, others disagree, stating that the rules are not strictly followed on several occasions. This is even though INEC is usually invited to observe and write a report accordingly. Some smaller parties (e.g., ADP) report no difficulty filling internal positions due to limited competition and a lack of monetary compensation. Additionally, 77.4% of the interviewees agree that internal party elections and party primaries are free and fair. In comparison, while 16.1% think the process is usually hijacked or unduly influenced by powerful party members, 6.50% did not respond. This finding contradicts existing literature. To illustrate, Karu (2011) observes that notwithstanding frameworks aimed at improving internal democracy, political parties continue to exhibit a deficiency in internal democracy, leading to internal conflicts and factionalization.

Figure 14: Respondents' views on whether internal party elections and party primaries are free and fair



Some of the challenges affecting internal party democracy

Some of the most common challenges regarding elections for party positions include the imposition of candidates, which often results in internal strife. Despite the requirements for elective congresses, some of the candidates are pre-selected or hand-picked.

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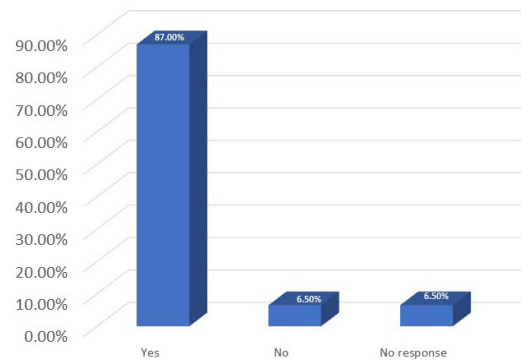
I have experienced a situation whereby the national chairman will be the one to hand-pick the state chairman or even local government chairmen at some point or even the zonal chairman at some point without any recourse to the national working committee. I stand against that very well because it is unhealthy; sometimes, it is used to malign some persons, and conflict comes into place when that happens.

”

The fallout of the crisis in ADC has led to the fractionalization of the party, pending when it can hold a national convention to unite all the factions.

As shown in Figure 15, 87% of those surveyed think that the leadership position/structure of the party is inclusive. There are defined positions for women, youths, and PWD. However, 6.5% of respondents do not think that parties' leadership is inclusive enough, and 6.50% provided no response. The latter categories of respondents believe that a statutory number of positions should be assigned to women and youths beyond the traditional women and youth leaders.

Figure 15: Respondent's views on whether the leadership position/structure of the party is inclusive (e.g., gender, PWD)



Control of Party Resources

Most interviewees agree that the management of party finances should be as prescribed in the party constitution. The process should be collective and controlled by the relevant organs of the party. The Financial Secretary keeps financial records while the Treasury keeps custody of funds and ensures that the party complies with the necessary financial controls under the Electoral Act and other relevant financial laws and

regulations. A few interviewees noted that fund management decisions often involve the NWC/NEC. However, some interviewees note this is not the case, as the National Chairman and their cohorts often hijack party funds with little scrutiny or oversight. However, decisions regarding finances are presented to the NWC for ratification.

Regarding individuals who hold excessive influence in political parties, 54.8% of those surveyed believe there is no external influence on party affairs, while 45% attest to some level of influence by an individual or a group of individuals. The interviews confirm this position, where some interviewees confirm the influence of some people in the party due to their wealth and privileges. However, some interviewees from the smaller parties (ADC, APM) say that the influence of wealthy people over the party is minimal or non-existent.

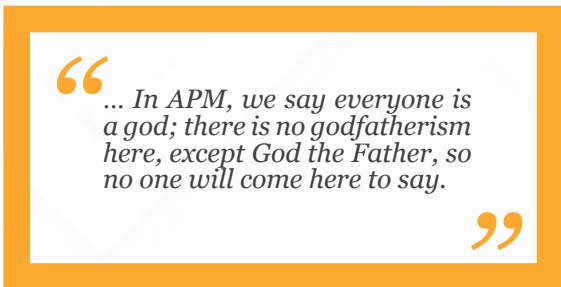
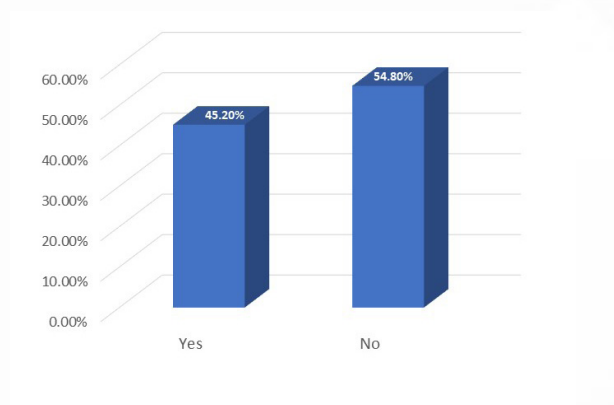


Figure 16: Respondents' views on whether there is external influence on party affairs

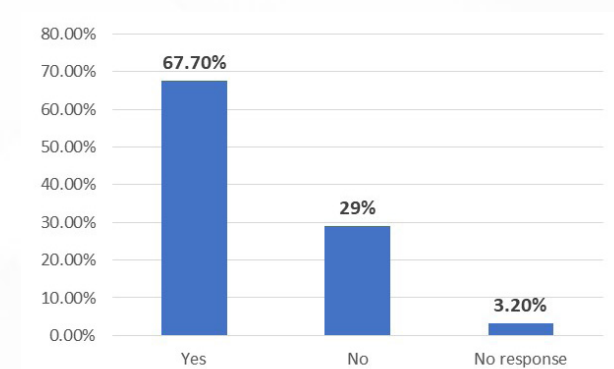


Communication between party leaders and members

Also, 67.7% of the surveyed respondents hold regular communication between party leadership and other party members, 29% consider it inadequate, and 3.20% do not respond. This conforms to data obtained through interviews,

where most interviewees indicate regular communication between the party leadership and other party members. They stated that party offices are open, and officers are always at hand to respond to queries and complaints by members. Some parties (such as ADC, BP) conduct regular meetings that are usually open to all members to participate actively. However, others say there is insufficient and sporadic communication between the party leadership and ordinary members.

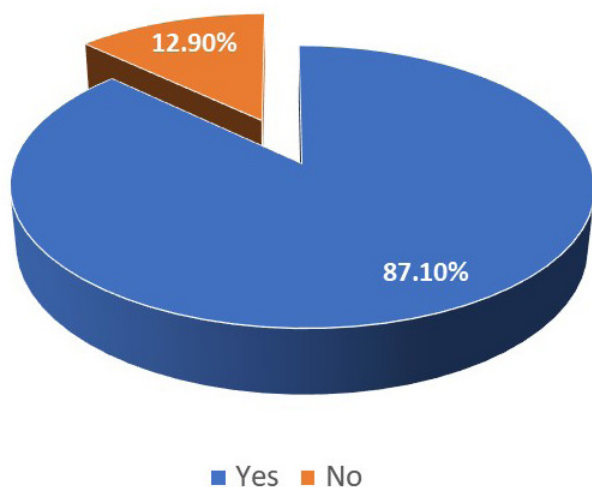
Figure 17: Respondents' views on whether party leadership communicate regularly with ordinary party members



Strategy

This section focuses on determining if political parties have strategic plans outlining their priorities and the party strategy for consolidating and expanding their political base. More so, 87.1% of those surveyed affirmed that their respective political parties have a strategic plan outlining their priorities, while 12.9% indicated no such document exists. Despite the high number of those who responded positively, no party provided a copy of its strategic plan during this study. This suggests a potential gap between the acknowledgement of having a plan and the willingness or ability to share it for scrutiny. The absence of concrete evidence, such as copies of the strategic plans, raises questions about the transparency and accessibility of these crucial documents. Without access to these plans, assessing the content, effectiveness, and implementation of the strategies outlined by political parties for their growth and consolidation efforts becomes challenging.

Figure 18: Respondents' views on whether their party has a strategic plan that outlines their priorities



Party's organisational priorities

All those interviewed noted that the priority of their parties is to win elections and establish government legitimately; as such, organisational priorities are tailored towards this goal. However, those interviewed did not provide details on how this is done.

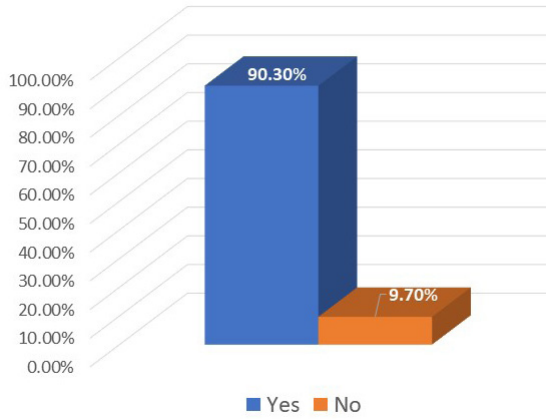
“...first, we need the party to operate in a manner that it would achieve its set goal of capturing power for the benefit of everybody, ensuring that the interests of all are equitably accommodated, and ensuring we do not go against the constitution in trying to achieve this...”

Other parties (YPP) highlighted party governance as a priority and the development of strategies to consolidate and expand the party's position. This suggests that the common thread among the parties is the fundamental goal of winning elections and forming a legitimate government. Yet, the interviews did not elaborate on the details of the strategies and mechanisms to achieve this goal.

Party activities between elections

Furthermore, Figure 19 shows that 90.3% of respondents in the survey stated that their parties are active between elections, and only 9.7% answered in the negative. Details from the interviews show that in between elections, some parties engage in strategy meetings, review performance in previous elections, expand membership, and build capacity for members and, on occasion, for the electorates. Some interviewees in this study stated that they focus on their regular jobs or businesses during reduced political activity.

Figure 19: Respondents' views on whether their party is active in between elections



Organisational Structure of Political Parties

Respondents from the PDP noted that the party is contesting the results of the February 2023 general elections at the Election Tribunal, after which it will shift its attention to the off-season elections in Edo, Imo, Kogi, and Bayelsa States. After that, the party will embark on ward and local government congresses.

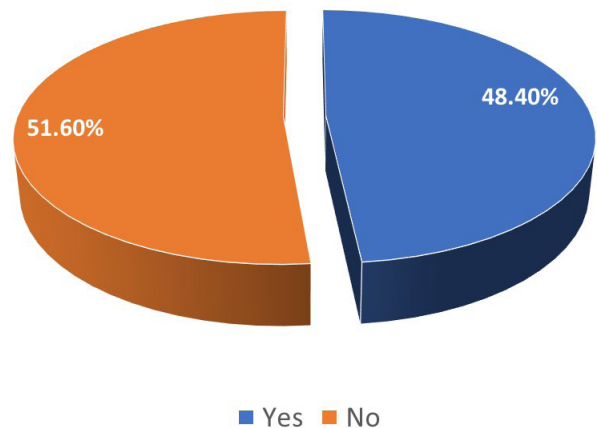
Internship opportunities have been created by some parties (ADC) for corps members. Other activities organised by parties between elections include policy research, conferences and seminars, diaspora engagement, and planning for the next elections. ADP engages in physical and online registration of new members, while YPP has been involved in hospital drives for blood donation, community cleaning, and participation in sports activities. The findings depict active and diverse engagement among political parties between elections, employing various strategies for political base expansion.

Strategy for Expanding and Consolidating Political Base

Figure 20 shows that 51.6% of those surveyed stated that their political party has strategies for expanding its political base, while 48.4% declared that no such strategies exist. Results from the interviews show that different parties use various strategies for expanding and consolidating their political bases. ADC, for instance, uses internships, public events, and outreach activities. ADP has also engaged with small and medium-scale enterprises and cooperative societies to support their businesses. This is, however, limited in scale due to funding challenges.

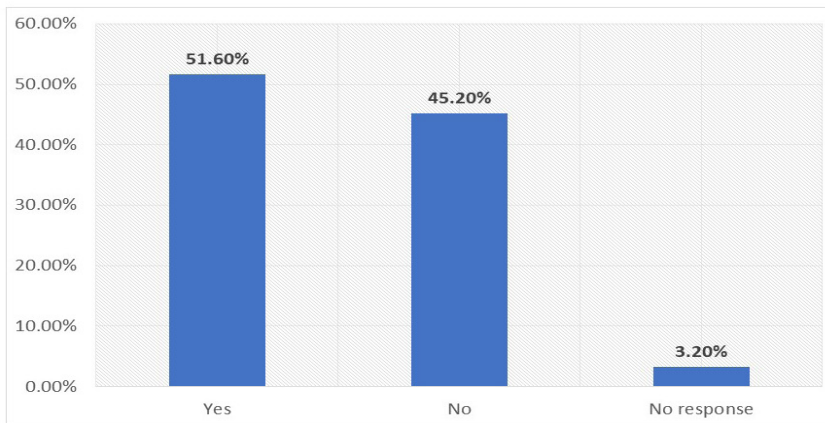
Given Nigeria's maturing democracy and the successes of the so-called 'smaller' parties in recent elections, there is growing confidence among these parties that they can compete and provide alternatives to the 'traditional big' parties. As such, these parties appear to focus more on developing strategies to reach new members, especially youth.

Figure 20: Respondents' views of whether their party have a strategy for expanding and consolidating their political base



On this question, 51.6% of those surveyed stated that their party uses public opinion polls to gauge its support, while 45.2% responded negatively. Though only 51.60% stated that their party employs opinion polls to gauge its support, increasingly, political parties worldwide and in Nigeria are using this medium to assess public perceptions, expectations, and views on specific topics or policy issues.

Figure 21: Respondents' views on the use of public opinion polls to gauge its support



Strategy to Compete in Future National and State-Level Elections

Several interviewees across the political parties (ADC, ADP) stated that their parties will focus on continuous advocacy and engagement with Nigerians, strengthening the party structure and presence across Nigeria, implementing policies that encourage public engagement, and expanding membership, particularly by reaching out to youths. Some parties (ADC, ADP) have engaged in post-election reviews to identify lessons learned and devise strategies for improvement in subsequent elections. Other parties (NRM) emphasise the need for free and fair elections that give equal opportunity to smaller parties. At the same time, the YPP prioritises identifying people with social capital to contest on the party platform.

Some Needs for the Party to Compete Effectively in Future Elections

Some of the needs identified by members include funding (ADC, ADP) and improved structures to promote visibility (ADC):

“ *The first answer is money, the second answer is money, and the third answer is money because, with money, we can reach out and disseminate our ideas; people will know who we are, what we stand for, what we can do and how we do them, people will be attracted by what we do, by what we can offer and so forth.* **”**

Some interviewees also pointed out how funding impedes their participation in elections:

“... we are expected to have polling agents at every PU all over the country, and you cannot just recruit somebody and not give him transport money; you do not even give him a sachet of pure water. It is not feasible. When you quantify the cash requirements, it is plenty of money, and the so-called smaller parties like us find that a very serious challenge. Because where you are not represented, they will shave your hair even in your absence.”

Engagement in Constructive Inter-Party Dialogue through the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC) or Other Forums

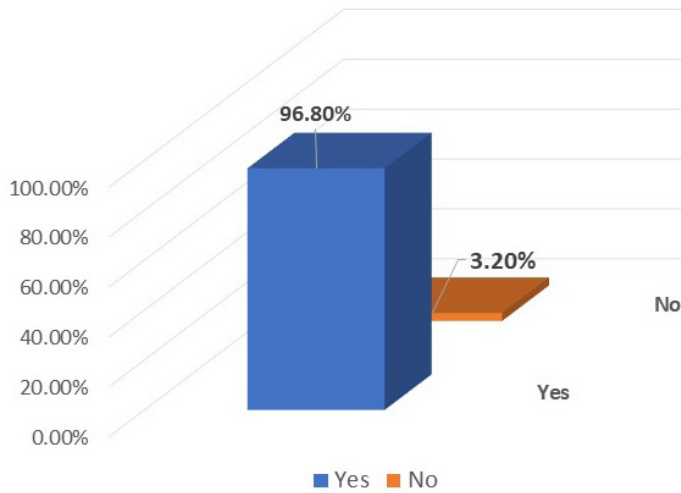
Most parties have established cordial relationships with the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC) through representatives of the party at IPAC and by participating in organised activities by the Council. There is also some level of partnership and engagement with other organisations, including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), the International Republican Institute (IRI), the European Union (EU), USAID, and YIAGA-Africa. Some interviewees identified the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Unit of INEC and its role in dispute resolution.

However, some interviewees feel it is inadequate and that inter-party relationships should be institutionalised. They doubt the willingness of the bigger parties, who sometimes fail even to attend joint meetings. This was confirmed through interviews where members of the PDP stated that the party is not involved in any such engagements now due to what it considers differences in interests and position, the undue dominance of the ruling party, and its tendency to hijack any such inter-party dialogue.

Membership/Supporters Profile

In this section, respondents were asked about the availability and status of party membership records. While 96.8% of respondents surveyed maintain that there is a formal membership process in their party, 3.20% disagree. All the parties surveyed claim that, in line with INEC guidelines, they maintain a comprehensive and updated database of members (electronic and hard copies) at the ward level of the party, which, in some cases, is updated daily. However, these were not sighted and could not be verified. YPP indicates that it has 3 million registered members, while the APC puts the number of its members at 42 million. However, most interviewees distinguished between active members and those whose names merely appear in the register.

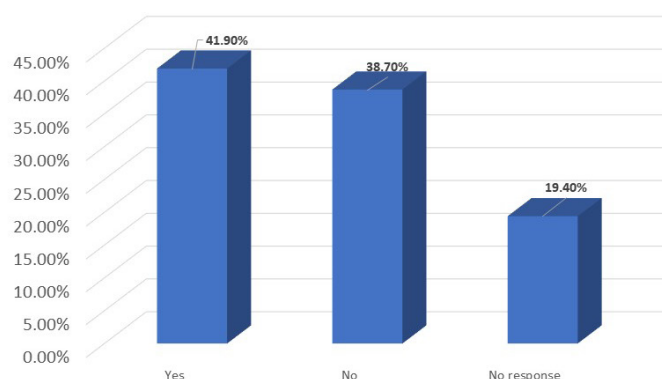
Figure 22: Respondents' view on whether there is a formal membership process



Some interviewees indicate that membership records are not always properly kept or comprehensive. On occasion, the identity of the people in the register cannot be ascertained, and some names are duplicated or fabricated. Some interviewees attribute low voter turnouts to the lack of integrity in record keeping by both INEC and political parties, among other reasons.

While 41.9% of the respondents confirm membership requirements or restrictions, 38.70% disagree, and 19.4% failed to respond, as shown in Figure 23. Common requirements for registration include name, contact address, phone number, e-mail address, and a form of identification (Permanent Voter Card (PVC) Number, Bank Verification Number [BVN] and National Identification Number [NIN]). Membership in most parties is free, and all members are also issued Identification (ID) Cards. However, members are required to pay a monthly subscription fee at the ward level. Failure to meet this requirement for a sustained period (e.g., six months for PDP) results in a lapse of membership. A few parties (ADP, NRM and APC) say their membership register is available online; others claim that the registration process has been digitised. However, online registrations could not be accessed or independently verified.

Figure 23: Respondents' views on whether there are any membership requirements or restrictions



Adequacy of the Formal Membership Process

Most respondents find the formal membership process adequate but not rigorous. The requirements are mostly simple and easy to follow. Some parties have introduced online registration portals to encourage young people to register. Some of the verified online registration portals for political parties include the following:

- ADP - <https://adp.ng/join-us>
- APC - https://apcregistration.com/new_member
- Boot - <https://boot.org.ng/join-us/>
- Labour - <https://labourparty.com.ng/labour-party-membership-registration-form-download/> (membership form for download)
- NRM - <https://www.nrm.org.ng/register.php>
- PRP - <https://prpnigeria.ng/members/register.php> (unsafe site)
- YPP - <https://ypp.ng/join-us/>

Some parties claim membership has increased, while others claim it has been stable. A few parties (ADC) stated that they have increased their membership and support base through coalitions and alliances with other parties (Labour).

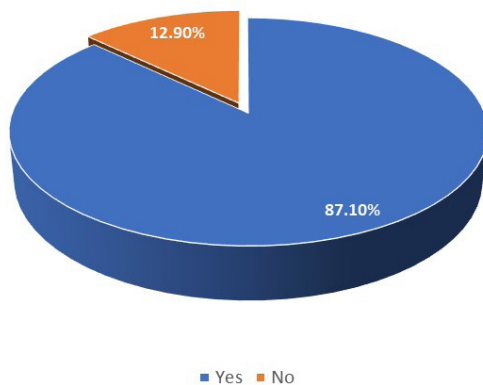
Adequacy of party strategies for reaching out to new members

Several methods are used by parties, including physical campaigns, canvassing (door-to-door), and traditional and social media platforms. Several parties undertake grassroots mobilisation. However, interviewees could not ascertain the adequacy of the strategies used to reach new members. Therefore, most interviewees do not think their party strategies for reaching out to new members are adequate.

Women and youth recruitment and development programmes

While 87.1% of those surveyed said their party has women and youth recruitment and development programmes, 12.9% replied negatively. The interviews confirmed that some parties have developed programmes for recruiting women and youth. For instance, ADC respondents stated that the party has a tailored approach called the 'Hundred Spartan' programme designed to recruit youths, women, and PWDs, and NRM organised a "Voter Revolution" to reach out to recruit new members. The PDP claims it has the highest number of women, youths, and PWDs in its ranks compared to any other party in Nigeria. This has not been empirically verified.

Figure 24: Respondents' views on whether their party has recruitment and development programmes for women and youth



Recruitment and Management of Volunteers

Some parties surveyed (ADC, ADP) recruit volunteers to assist with the party's activities. ADC and ADP recruit students and corps members, and they have mobilisation and recruitment officers appointed to drive this process. Overall, the structure for managing volunteers in political parties is either non-existent or under-developed. APM posts volunteers to their states of origin, where they are processed and assigned tasks by the national chairman.

“

YPP... we have a volunteer link on our website. You mustn't be a member, and we have options for those who want to volunteer. We have many volunteers who join in our off-season activities that are not election-related, like blood donation, competitions, and community services... they like some of what we do and choose to identify with the party.

”

Legislative Profile

Respondents were asked to comment on the role of ruling and opposition parties in the legislature. Whereas some big parties can track and even coordinate the positions adopted by their members in the National Assembly, most smaller parties cannot do this. This situation is worsened because legislators elected on the platform of smaller parties easily switch parties once they are in the legislature, as seen with ADC and ADP.

In many of the parties, there is no requirement for legislators to report back to the party and no formal process for influencing the legislative agenda. Small parties

generally feel their legislators should propagate their party positions while in the legislature. However, they do not think they can exercise influence over the legislative agenda of the National Assembly. This is even when some are elected under their platforms to chair committees in the House of Representatives (ADC has 1 Chairman).

“
Party representatives in the legislature are supposed to vote according to party positions because that is why they went there for... in fact, it is even what they campaigned on... and said, look, I want to get to the legislature with ADP as my platform. So, you must go and protect and advance our philosophy. It is the expectation.
 ”

The minority parties in the National Assembly play the role of opposition, but interviewees feel that this role has not been adequately performed. Some interviewees from the PDP stated that the party is constituting a ‘responsible opposition’ that focuses on constructive criticism rather than de-marketing Nigeria or overheating the polity. Other interviewees, especially among the smaller parties, noted the advantage of collaboration between opposition parties and how IPAC provides a platform for them to advise and criticise government policies and proposed legislation in the legislature.

The analysis highlights critical challenges confronted by smaller parties in the legislature. Primarily, the struggle for smaller parties to effectively track and coordinate their members’ positions in the legislature is compounded by the frequent and effortless party-switching among elected legislators.

This predicament underscores the diminished influence of party ideologies within Nigeria’s political landscape. The ease with which legislators, initially elected under party banners, shift allegiance contributes to a broader issue where the quest for political power takes precedence over addressing substantive issues and upholding party philosophies.

Effectiveness of Party Caucuses in the Legislature

Of the 18 political parties that participated in the 2023 general elections, only eight have won seats in the current Tenth National Assembly; the APC has the majority seats in the Senate (59) and House (178), while the PDP has 36 seats in the Senate and 115 in the House. Other parties with seats include the Labour Party (8 and 35), the Social Democratic Party (2 and 2), the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) (2 and 19), the All-Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) (1 and 5), Young Progressives Party (YPP) (1 and 2), and the African Democratic Congress (ADC) has 2 seats in the House of Representatives. The representation of parties across (SHA) is shown below.

Table 10: Parties represented in State Houses of Assembly

S.No.	Party	Seats in State Houses of Assembly
1	APC	570 / 991
2	PDP	325 / 991
3	LP	26 / 991
4	APGA	19 / 991
5	NNPP	26 / 991
6	YPP	2 / 991
7	SDP	0 / 991
8	ADC	1 / 991

Source: data from INEC as of May 2023

Effectiveness of Party Caucuses in the Legislature

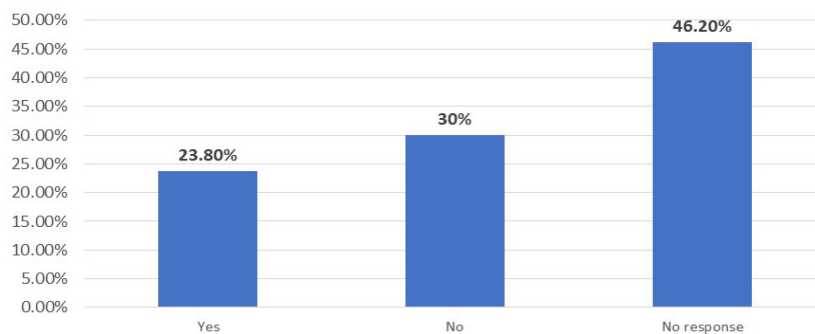
Only 12.9% of those surveyed confirmed that their party has a legislative caucus (NASS/SHA), 45.2% said their party has no caucus, and 41.9% declined to respond. This is largely because not all parties have won seats in the legislature. Moreover, the limited presence of smaller parties in the legislature, as indicated by the low percentage of surveyed respondents confirming the existence of a legislative caucus.

30% of those surveyed noted that their party caucus does not function adequately and does not meet regularly, 23.8% expressed satisfaction

with the functioning of party caucuses, and 46.2% were silent. The APC states that its caucus at the National Assembly meets monthly, and there are regular exchanges between it and the party.

The survey findings on the effectiveness of party caucuses in the legislature reveal a nuanced scenario, with 30% expressing dissatisfaction and 23.8% reporting satisfaction. This indicates prevalent challenges across the political spectrum. Notably, smaller parties may face hurdles in developing and maintaining well-functioning legislative caucuses.

Figure 25: Respondents' views on whether their party's Caucuses function adequately and meet regularly



Accountability of Parliamentary Representatives to Party Principles

The ruling party (APC), which has a majority in both the Senate and the House, holds regular meetings with the leadership of the National Assembly and has promoted harmonious working relationships between the legislature and the executive. It can and does hold representatives accountable to party principles through its caucus.

However, most other parties noted the difficulty in holding legislators accountable, as many do not consider themselves beholden to the party after the elections. This issue is more endemic

among smaller parties, which have tried several approaches, including dialogue, legal action, naming and shaming, etc., to hold elected representatives to party principles without much success. Some reasons for the difficulty in holding representatives accountable by political parties include reliance on these representatives for funding. Others explain that once elected, politicians appear to focus more on personal gain, particularly given the high cost of contesting elections in Nigeria.

“ ... the party does not have total control in holding parliamentarians accountable... these parliamentarians are accountable to the powers that be in the legislative and executive arm of government. There have been cases of elected officials of a party engaging in anti-party politics, which is against the principles and constitution guiding the party.

”

Certain political parties like ADC have internal committees that create guidelines for communication between legislators and the party. This allows the party to provide input and hold members accountable. Through this mechanism, the party can provide input and hold members accountable. Elected officials are party ambassadors, and their manifestos and programmes are expected to reflect the general party manifesto. The YPP held meetings with its representatives in the Tenth National Assembly to discuss the party's ideology and policy priorities, and an induction programme was organised to prepare them for their role in the legislature.

A predominant challenge reported by parties (ADC, ADP) is the recurring challenge of defection of members after being elected on the party platform. This is despite the constitutional provisions restricting cross-carpeting to situations with an internal crisis within the party. Section 68 (1) (g) of the constitution states,

“ A member of the Senate or the House of Representatives shall vacate his seat in the House of which he is a member if – (g) being a person whose election to the House was sponsored by a political party, he becomes a member of another political party before the expiration of the period for which that House was elected. Provided that his membership of the latter political party is not because of a division in the political party of which he was previously a member or of a merger of two or more political parties or factions by one of which he was previously sponsored.

”

Do Representatives in Parliament Vote According to Party Positions?

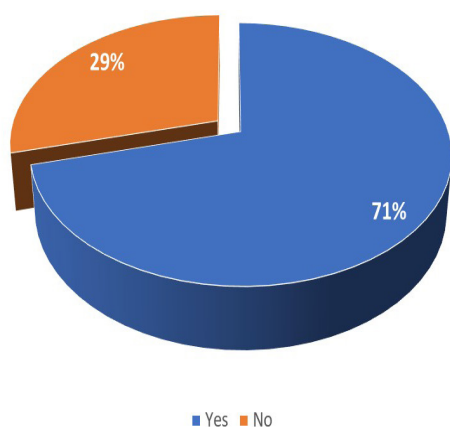
The APC says that it uses the party caucus, which meets monthly with party officials and representatives from the executive branch, to ensure that those elected under its platform vote according to party positions. Some parties with minority seats in the National Assembly cannot verify if their members vote according to party positions. This is partly due to the limited number – some parties hold only one seat. However, some interviewees confirm that their representatives in the legislature vote according to party positions. It is difficult to confirm without data on the voting patterns of members of the National Assembly.

Capacity Building

The very survival of democracy depends on strong and dynamic political parties. In this section, respondents were asked about the adequacy of human resources, training facilities, and opportunities for capacity building for leaders, staff members, and legislators. Also investigated is the capacity of political parties for policy research, analysis, formulation, and engagement with other parties and partners in capacity building. Of those surveyed, 71% stated that the party holds annual or regular conferences. In contrast, 29% disagreed. Some of the parties are satisfied with the human resources available to the party to manage its activities. They also state that training facilities are available and well-managed. In some instances (ADC), specific officers are assigned the role of strengthening the capacity of members in specific areas. Some of the capacity-building exercises undertaken include workshops for aspirants and candidates.

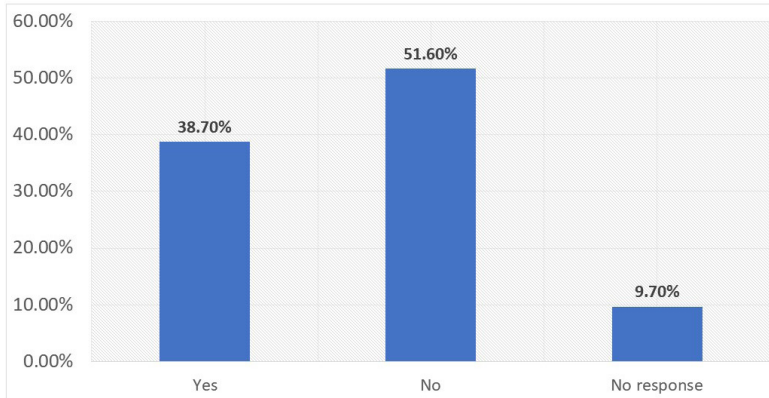
However, several interviewees say that human resources are insufficient, capacity-building facilities and opportunities are limited for party officials and members, and existing resources should be better managed. For instance, YPP organises training activities for its leaders, staff, and members 2-3 times a year.

Figure 26: Respondents' views on whether their party holds annual or regular conferences



On whether the party organises regular workshops for its staff, 51.6% of respondents answered negatively, while 38.7% responded in the affirmative, and 9.7% provided no response. Whereas some parties can organise and fund training programmes (mostly at the national level), many smaller parties have never developed or conducted such training due to limited funding. Some topics covered at the training include leadership, communication, party financing, etc. Joint capacity buildings are common but often organised by external parties rather than political parties. Notable partners include INEC, IPAC, NILDS, Kukah Centre, UN Women, and development partners.

Figure 27: Respondents' views on whether their party organises regular workshops for staff

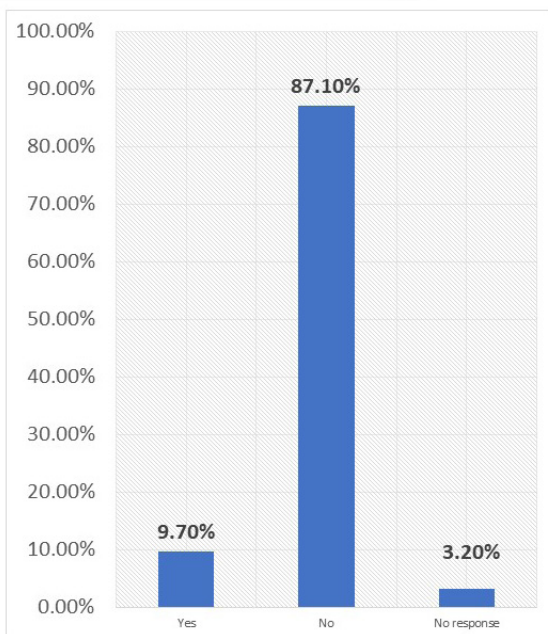


As noted by an interviewee, there are few opportunities for international training programmes. Some interviewees noted a growing 'donor fatigue' in providing capacity and technical support for parties sometimes considered 'basket cases'.

Capacity Building in Political Parties

As shown above, out of those surveyed, 87.1% confirmed they had not attended any capacity- building workshops in the past two years, 9.7% stated they had participated in such workshops, and 3.2% provided no response. This includes respondents from states and the national headquarters and highlights the limited opportunities for capacity-building available to political parties. It reveals a significant gap in the capacity-building efforts at both sub-national and federal levels. Some of the areas identified by respondents for capacity strengthening include party administration, financial management, professionalisation of parties, fundraising, and campaign strategies.

Figure 28: Respondents' Response on whether they have participated in any capacity-building workshop in the past two years

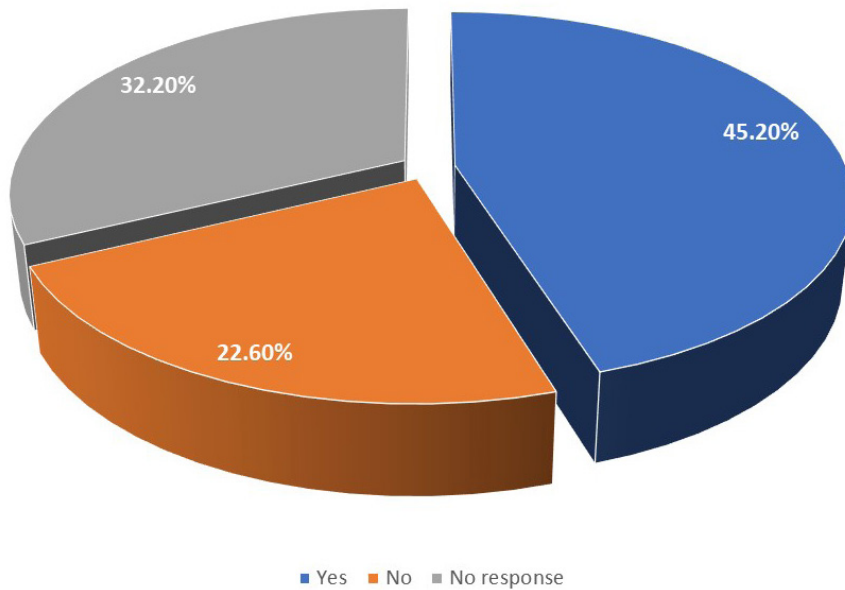


Of those surveyed, 45.2% of respondents declared that their party has a capacity-building institute or arm, while 22.6% responded negatively, and 32.2% failed to respond. The PDP established the Peoples Democratic Institute (PDI) in 2000 as its intellectual base for research into good governance and national development policies. However, the PDI has experienced mixed fortunes,

having been active for some time but dormant since 2015. There have been recent attempts to revitalise the institute. Parties that do not have internal training institutes rely on external opportunities. In some instances, such as with the APM, training opportunities are limited to a few people in leadership positions due to financial constraints.

Specifically, parties like ADC admit to having internal capacity for research and policy formulation, while many others do not. Additionally, expertise in policy analysis and formulation is lacking in many parties. Some parties, such as ADC and ADP, have sometimes leveraged the professionals in their ranks to assist.

Figure 29: Respondents' views on whether their party has a capacity-building institute or arm

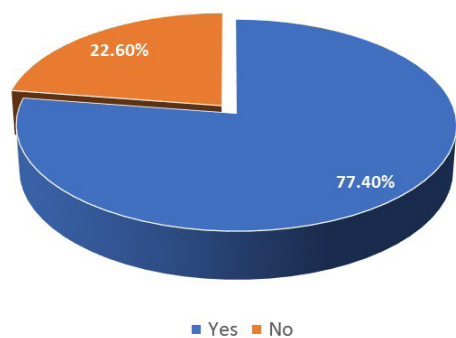


Funding

Political parties require funding to play their part effectively in the political process. Yet, this issue is one of the most difficult for political parties in Nigeria. This section examines how political parties are financed, their capacity to mobilise resources for their activities, transparency and accountability in managing party finances, the level of funding and challenges they face, and the financial sustainability of political parties in general. The major funding sources for many parties include selling forms (expression of interest and nomination forms). Other sources include membership levies/fees, the sale of party paraphernalia, personal contributions and donations by members, aspirants/candidates and stakeholders, fundraising dinners, and charity.

However, the amount paid as annual dues is typically nominal. Even then, it was pointed out that most members do not comply. For instance, the APC requires all its members to be 'financial members' or forfeit membership. The YPP projects it raised about N200 million from the sale of forms in 2023 and an additional N20-30 million from monthly subscriptions. This is negligible compared to the APC, which was projected to have raised over N30 billion, while PDP's inflow was over N276 million. These funds are used for election campaigns, the management and administration of the party, and to implement party activities.

Figure 30: Respondents' views on whether their party is financially stable



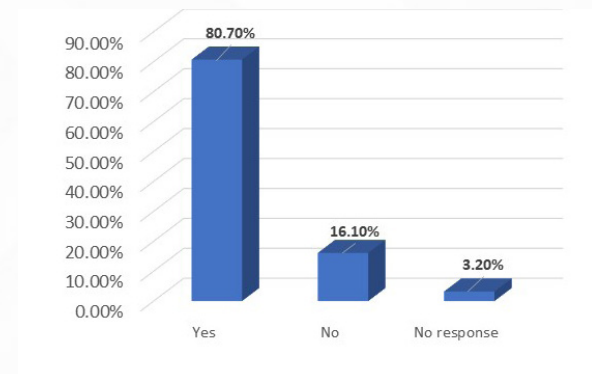
As shown above, 77.4% of respondents in the survey believe that their party is financially stable, while 22.6% do not. While the bigger parties can mobilise more resources, the smaller parties usually struggle to raise the resources required to administer the party effectively (ADC, ADP, APM). In the latter's case, the parties are not entirely financially sustainable and face funding challenges.

Some interviewees mentioned that ruling parties sometimes use state resources to fund party activities. At the same time, those in opposition do not have similar access, which leaves them disadvantaged. This was confirmed by respondents in the ruling party:

“
...if we are the party in power, yes [we are financially stable], to the extent that we have means beyond what we generate from our ‘financial members’ to fund party activities and compete. But in the long run, I do not think this is sustainable. I will always advocate that parties should have a sustainable income stream... and I don’t believe that parties should be seen as beggars because once you put yourself in that position, it means that the person giving you that money dictates what you do, and this undermines democracy... parties should not get money from the executive but solely from their members...
 ”

In the absence of adequate funds, many political parties cannot hire and pay competent staff, nor can they undertake sensitisation and other party programmes. A few interviewees stated they do not know how the party is funded. Overall, some interviewees agree that political parties can mobilise resources for their activities if properly managed.

Figure 30: Respondents’ views on whether their party is accountable and transparent in its finances



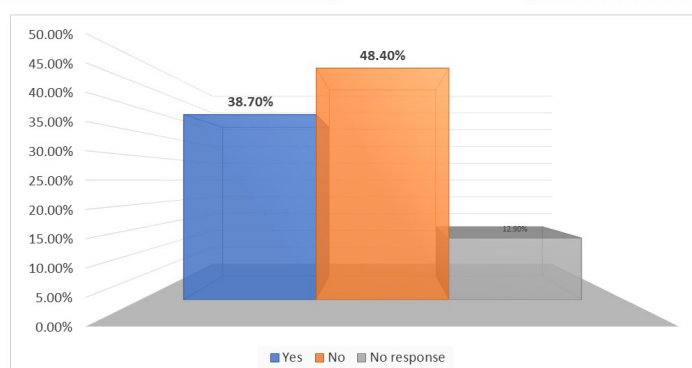
Of those surveyed on this question, 80.7% consider their party accountable and transparent in its finances, 16.10% believe otherwise, and 3.20% did not respond. The survey results correspond with the interviews, where most respondents stated that funds raised by their parties are managed efficiently and transparently, and some parties have their accounts regularly audited. However, several other respondents (16.1%) and some interviewees do not think party finances are always optimally managed. There have been several cases of poor or mismanagement of funds, and some parties (ADC) have established investigative panels to investigate such cases.

“
... we raise funds using our monthly dues, which is inadequate, and the stakeholders and BOT are not contributing to the party. So, basically, it is when politicians come and give money to the party, those who want to run elections. So, funds are majorly raised through the state of party funds for elections or elective positions, appeals for funds, and then from generous stakeholders or Nigerians if they give any money to the party. That is how funds have been raised so far, and then through party materials that are sold. But in all, I do not have any idea how much is generated and how it is spent. I do not have any idea...
 ”

Communication

This section examines the nature and structure of communication among the various political parties, including internal and external communication, the policies and procedures for communication, the media types used, the extent to which parties have used technology to strengthen their activities, public relations, poll-watching³, etc. Of those surveyed, 48.4% do not think their party has a well-articulated communication structure. However, 38.7% of those surveyed and several interviewed noted the presence of a structure through which the party communicates with members at all levels before, during, and after elections. This is managed by the publicity secretaries⁴ of the respective parties, who oversee and enhance the public image of their parties by disseminating information, managing media relations, and shaping the party's image through various communication channels. Notably, 12.90% of those surveyed did not respond to the question. Some parties claim well-developed communication structures and internal and external communication procedures, but others say no clear communication policy exists. For instance, at ADP, the publicity secretary must vet and approve all communications before publication.

Figure 32: Respondents' view on whether their party has a communication structure

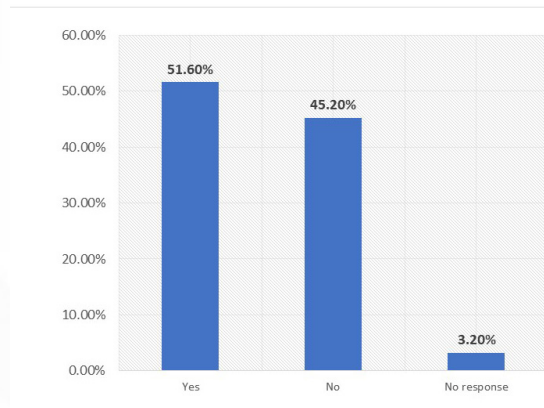


Even where respondents attested to a party communication structure, 71% believed the structures do not operate properly. In comparison, 45.2% of those surveyed do not think their party communicates its views to citizens, and 3.20% provided no response.

3. Poll-watching refers to the practice of observing and monitoring the electoral process, particularly during voting hours at polling stations, to ensure transparency, fairness, and adherence to election laws. Poll-watchers are usually assigned by a political party, non-governmental organization or independent monitors.

4. The duties of publicity secretary include drafting press releases, organising press conferences, and coordinating communication strategies to effectively convey the party's messages.

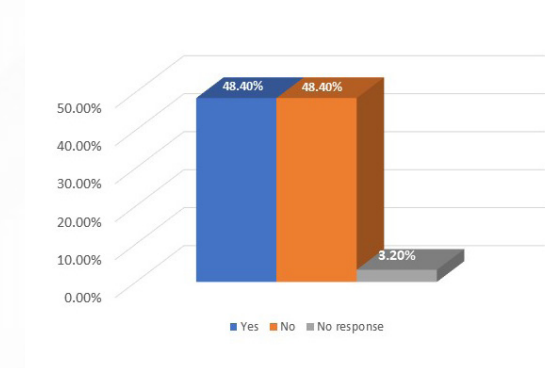
Figure 33: Respondents' views on whether their party communicate its views to citizens



Several parties have prioritised using modern communications technology, including e-mails and other social media platforms, including SMS, WhatsApp, Zoom, YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook, to reach out to members and the public. Of these, WhatsApp is predominantly favoured by the parties surveyed due to its ease of usage and ability to reach many people. Other means utilised include radio, television, press releases, press conferences, interactive sessions with media personnel, etc. Some interviewees could not ascertain the effectiveness of new technology in party communication, as these are not usually sustained but undertaken haphazardly.

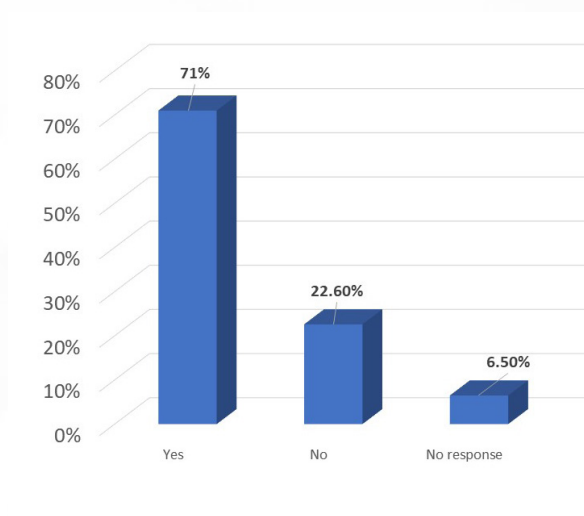
Of those surveyed, 48.4% of respondents stated that their party has a functional and regularly updated official website, while another 48.4% answered negatively and 3.20% provided no response. A search revealed that only a few political parties have functional websites (ADP, APC, Boot, Labour, NRM, PRP and YPP), while others do not.

Figure 34: Respondents' views on whether their party has a functional and regularly updated official web page



According to the chart, 71% of the respondents maintained that their party has equal access to media outlets such as television and radio. However, 22.6% of those surveyed and some interviewees claim that media houses tend to be more disposed to bigger parties with more resources than smaller ones. It is important to note that 6.50% of those surveyed did not respond. As such, the mega parties can reach out to more people and advance their positions.

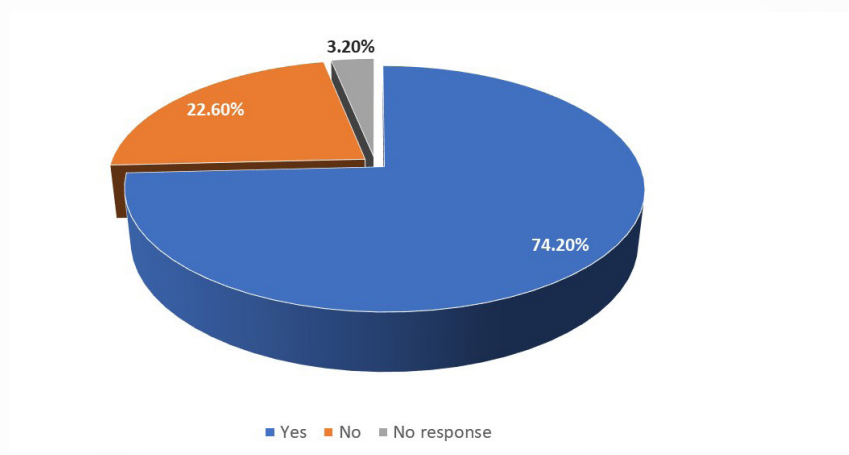
Figure 35: Respondents' views on whether their party has equal access to media outlets such as television and radio



Electoral Campaign

Political parties are usually engaged in organised efforts to win voter support in the period preceding an election. The strategies used by Nigeria’s political parties are discussed in this section, including candidate selection and recruitment, management of campaigns, mobilisation of members and supporters, and the ability of the party to monitor election polls. The interviews showed that most parties have no defined policies or guidelines for recruiting candidates. For some, the process typically involves individuals indicating interest, purchasing forms, and participating in party primaries⁵. However, while 74.2% of those surveyed expressed that their party has a systematic and articulated strategy for campaigns, 22.60% responded negatively, and 3.20% did not respond.

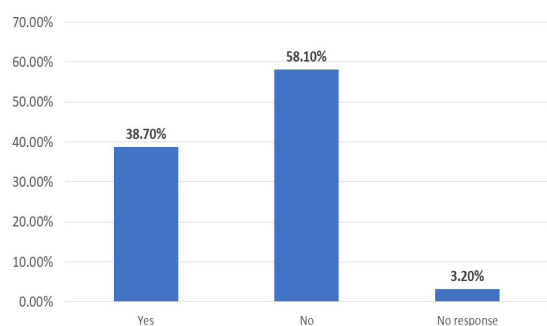
Figure 36: Respondents’ views on whether their party has a systematic and articulated strategy for campaigns



Some parties have special committees for recruiting candidates. Some parties, such as ADC, sometimes headhunt qualified and suitable individuals. However, some parties (ADP) do not recruit candidates but rely on people to offer themselves as candidates for consideration. Of those surveyed, 58.1% did not consider their party’s campaign strategy efficient, while 38.70% did, and 3.20% provided no response.

⁵ Party primaries are internal elections held by political parties to choose their candidates for various elected offices, such as presidential, gubernatorial, senatorial, or legislative positions. These elections are conducted within the political party and serve as a mechanism for party members to express their preferences and select individuals who will represent the party in the general election.

Figure 37: Respondents' views on whether they consider their party's campaign strategy efficient

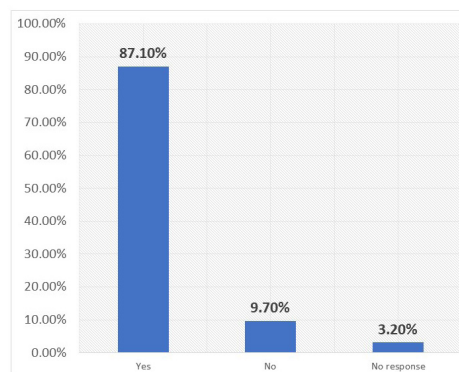


The Electoral Act and other relevant INEC guidelines regulate campaigns. Some parties have also developed internal guidelines and offices dedicated to campaigns. In a few instances, some parties have established mechanisms for training aspirants and candidates to run effective campaigns. In ADC, this is referred to as 'Candidates College'. Campaign management appears decentralised at all levels of the party. Presidential campaigns typically involve national, state and local party leadership.

Sometimes, campaigns are managed through the relevant offices established to manage national or state-level elections. However, in others (ADC, ADP), candidates are responsible for managing their campaign activities. In some cases, there is an interface between candidates and the party hierarchy, but this is neither mandatory nor always strictly adhered to (ADC). The absence of clear-cut campaign strategies and the lack of synergy between candidates and parties have sometimes led to conflict.

⁶ The Situation Room is a special space where party leaders and analysts come together to analyse live election information, helping them make decisions and plan strategies during elections.

Figure 38: Respondents' views on whether their party monitor polling places during elections



On this question, 87.1% of respondents stated that their party monitors polling places during elections, 9.70% stated otherwise, and 3.20% did not respond. In the interviews, some parties (ADC) stated that they can systematically and accurately monitor election polls in line with the guidelines of INEC. This is done through polling agents, mostly party members, recruits, or volunteers. Also, several parties have used the 'Situation Rooms'⁶ mechanism alone or in collaboration with others to monitor election results or undertake parallel vote tabulation. Some parties have produced detailed reports of the last general elections, while others have not. However, some parties (e.g., ADP and APM) say they lack the resources to monitor polls sustainably.

Most interviewees stated that they identify their party's ideology as the reason for the support it receives at elections. This is true for smaller parties with limited financial resources; hence, the party cannot induce members (ADC). In fact, the party claims that its ideology is spiritual, as shown in its handshake logo and its motto of 'arise and shine'. For the YPP, the party's support has largely been due to its consistency and commitment to raising a new generation of leaders.

CONCLUSIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This research assesses the needs, challenges, and gaps within Nigerian political parties, focusing on developing effective capacity-building strategies to improve their overall efficiency and operations. The primary aim is to devise interventions that strengthen these parties, enhancing their role in democratic consolidation. The study employs a mixed-methods approach involving structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews with members of selected political parties in Nigeria. The study was conducted after the 2023 general elections.

Political parties go beyond their traditional functions of organising elections, representing citizens' interests, and fostering national unity; they also play a crucial role in ensuring political accountability and democratic stability. The study recognises the essential function of the institutionalised party system in holding politicians accountable and establishing a direct link between political parties and governance. To effectively fulfil their functions, political parties must operate inclusively and transparently. The study highlights the significance of political parties adhering to democratic principles, particularly in their internal processes. To enhance their contribution to governance, political parties should have participatory and inclusive structures, transparency, and values aligned with democratic principles. The study underscores the importance of political parties providing well-founded and evidence-based responses to societal issues for optimal effectiveness.

Conclusion

In this concluding section, the study's principal findings are laid out. Nigeria's political landscape is governed by various legal and regulatory frameworks, including the 1999 Constitution, the 2023 Electoral Act, and guidelines set forth by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). While many interviewees demonstrate awareness of these frameworks, criticisms abound regarding their weaknesses and inadequacies, particularly concerning regulatory and institutional frameworks. Despite the existence of ethical guidelines for party leadership, there's a lack of clarity regarding the development and implementation of these guidelines.

Regarding political party ideology, while most parties claim to have ideologies, confusion persists among respondents regarding the definition and implementation of these ideologies. While some parties have clear positions, others lack defined ideologies or struggle to influence policies based on their ideological stances. In terms of organisational structure, most political parties have structures at all levels, as mandated by the constitution and INEC guidelines. However, some

parties lack clear organisational structures, leading to poor coordination. Mixed opinions exist on the professionalism of party operations, with disparities between well-developed national structures and less-developed local structures. The question of internal party processes also yields mixed results, with varying opinions on the presence of formal structures for policy development and inclusivity in decision-making processes. While internal party democracy is generally perceived as adequate, challenges such as the imposition of candidates and conflicts leading to party fractionalisation persist.

Furthermore, regular communication between party leadership and members exists in most parties, and most parties employ various communication strategies, including electronic platforms. However, some respondents noted that they are inadequate. Despite strategic plans for expanding political bases, transparency and accessibility of these plans are concerning. Importantly, funding remains a significant challenge for parties, impacting their ability to compete effectively in elections. Engagement in inter-party dialogue varies among parties, with challenges arising from differences in interests and the dominance of larger parties.

Membership processes in political parties' face challenges in record-keeping and integrity issues despite efforts to maintain formal processes. Strategies for reaching out to new members are perceived as inadequate, and programmes for recruiting women and youth lack empirical verification.

Lastly, in the legislature, smaller parties face challenges in coordinating members' positions, exacerbated by frequent party-switching among elected legislators. Capacity-building opportunities for party officials and members are limited, and transparency in managing party finances varies among parties. Additionally, campaign strategies and candidate recruitment processes pose challenges, alongside monitoring polling places during elections.

Recommendations

This section presents the recommendations from the analysis and discusses the study's findings, as presented in previous sections. Some general recommendations include strengthening the ideological basis of political parties in Nigeria and ensuring that party activities align with these principles and professionalising the record-keeping of political parties to enhance their effectiveness. Other recommendations are strengthening capacity-building interventions for political parties, passing independent legislation to regulate political parties, improving accountability and transparency in fund management, and strengthening legislative caucuses.

Constitutional, Statutory, and Regulatory Framework

1. The 1999 Constitution, the Electoral Act of 2023, and other guidelines and regulations developed by INEC regulate political parties in Nigeria. Political parties in Nigeria should educate and train members on the regulatory frameworks governing them to increase awareness and understanding.
2. Considering the diverse opinions on the necessity of separate legislation to regulate political parties in Nigeria, it is crucial to review the existing regulatory framework thoroughly. While 71% of respondents strongly agree with separate legislation, 29% disagree. To reconcile differing opinions, a comprehensive review of the regulatory framework is essential to assess the need for separate legislation, such as the Political Parties Act, 2018, in Malawi, to effectively regulate political parties in Nigeria.
3. The National Assembly should promptly review the Electoral Act of 2022 to address the highlighted gaps from interviews. In this regard, immediate amendments are necessary to address the challenges faced in the 2023 general elections. Specifically, there is an urgent need to create a law requiring technology like Biometric Voter Authentication Systems (BVAS) and Electronic Result Transmission (IReV) in elections.
4. Furthermore, there should be efforts to strengthen the local electoral system to reduce the influence of governors who might manipulate elections for personal benefit. These steps enhance transparency, accountability, and fairness in elections, ensuring democratic representation at all governance levels.
5. To enhance oversight and enforcement, the National Assembly should create an independent regulatory body to supervise political party activities and enforce laws and sanctions for compliance with electoral regulations.
6. A comprehensive review of political party regulations in Nigeria is necessary. This could involve implementing stricter criteria for party registration, such as requiring a minimum number of members or demonstrating a certain level

of support. Furthermore, engaging other independent bodies like the EFCC and ICPC, apart from INEC, in the registration process could safeguard political parties against corruption and external pressures. Moreover, viewing political parties as 'public trusts' rather than 'private entities' could entail implementing steps like disclosing funding sources and assets to enhance transparency and accountability.

7. There is a need to comprehensively review the legal and normative regulations governing political parties in Nigeria. An important consideration is to reevaluate the criteria for establishing new political parties, especially the requirement for presence in at least 24 states, to prevent potential manipulation through deceptive arrangements.

8. Political parties should regularly review their constitutions with the participation of all members to ensure adequacy and strength. During evaluations, emphasis should be placed on assessing the depth, originality, and sincerity of party documents to prevent personal interest manipulation. The review process should be transparent, fostering stronger regulatory frameworks for political activities.

9. There is a need to review and standardise the expression of interest fees levied by political parties. All parties should adopt a consistent fee structure for expressing interest.

10. Additionally, a more rigorous verification by INEC of information provided by aspiring parties and the implementation of stricter prerequisites are critical. INEC should conduct regular verifications and audits of political parties to evaluate their financial health and viability, addressing current shortcomings.

11. Stricter legislation is required to regulate party affairs, including funding, due to concerns about the influence of 'godfathers' and 'money bags' in party management. Comprehensive laws addressing disclosure, reporting, monitoring, and enforcement are recommended.

12. Considering the diverse viewpoints on INEC's status, which include recommendations for both unbundling and internal reform to improve effectiveness, it is advisable to thoroughly review INEC's structure and functions. The main goal of this review is to assess the feasibility and advantages of separating INEC's roles in party registration and governance from its election management responsibilities. The assessment should meticulously examine potential cost implications and the impact on overall election management efficiency. Additionally, exploring the option of internal restructuring within INEC is crucial. This involves creating additional departments and units with quasi-independent powers to enhance synergy and efficiency without establishing new agencies. The evaluation of this internal reform option should include consultations with relevant stakeholders and a thorough assessment of its potential effects on performance and accountability. This entails restructuring INEC internally by establishing additional departments and units with quasi-independent powers to enhance synergy and efficiency, avoiding the creation of new agencies. An overarching review that engages political parties, civil society, legal experts, and other stakeholders is essential

to ensure a robust and inclusive decision-making process. This will help strengthen the credibility of elections and election management bodies and, ultimately, Nigeria's democracy.

13. There is a crucial need to enhance the administrative, financial, and institutional autonomy of INEC to regulate the use of hate speech during election campaigns effectively. The electoral management body (EMB) often cannot penalise high-ranking public officials who violate existing electoral rules and guidelines, primarily due to institutional limitations. This institutional weakness has undeniably impeded the efficient coordination of electoral processes by the EMB.

14. Considering the varying clarity on developing formal codes of conduct for party leadership, it is recommended that political parties ensure greater transparency and consistency in implementing ethical guidelines. Parties lacking well-defined codes of conduct should consider developing explicit provisions, and those with existing codes should ensure their effective implementation. It is essential to prioritise clarity on the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees (BOT) and the development of codes of conduct for ethical governance.

15. To strengthen the regulatory framework for political parties, it is recommended that political parties regularly review their constitutions, ensuring strict adherence to internal policies regarding constitutional review. This approach ensures sincerity and effectiveness in governing party affairs by fostering a shared understanding among members and preventing misinterpretation or exploitation for personal gain. Parties should conduct thorough evaluations to identify areas for improvement, maintain relevance, and address concerns about constitutional depth, regardless of perceived sufficiency. Transparency and inclusivity throughout the review process involving members at all levels are essential for strengthening the regulatory framework for political activities.

Development and Implementation of Ideologies

Comprehending the ideologies of political parties is vital for analysing their policies, strategies, and overall trajectory. Within this section, recommendations for the development and implementation of political party ideologies are provided.

1. Political parties can enhance clarity in their ideologies by organising awareness campaigns and educational programmes highlighting the difference between ideology and political philosophy. Additionally, comprehensive reviews of ideological positions are recommended to address confusion among members.
2. Furthermore, to establish systematic processes for ideology development and implementation, parties should define clear methods, ensuring inclusivity and transparency. The process could involve documenting the formulation process, explicitly defining party values, and incorporating ideologies in constitutional documents for consistency.

3. Additionally, parties should adopt inclusive decision-making processes on ideological issues, engage members in discussions, and consider diverse perspectives. This fosters a deeper commitment to party ideology beyond electoral cycles.
4. Recognising the fluidity in party membership and the challenge of aligning party policies with ideology, it is recommended that parties engage in deliberate measures to inculcate ideology and ensure it permeates party positions and activities. If successful, this could foster a sense of commitment among members and discourage opportunistic party switching for personal gains.

Political Party Management

1. Political parties should take deliberate steps to strengthen their internal structures to address observed organisational gaps. This includes ensuring the proper constitution of all party organs. Properly constituted structures enhance clarity, coordination, and overall cohesion within the party. Parties should prioritise comprehensive geographical representation by establishing offices across all states and local government areas. Such actions will enhance the inclusivity and effectiveness of party operations.
2. Political parties should conduct critical evaluations and implement improvements to address varying opinions on professionalism and communication channels. To build trust and credibility, parties should operate more professionally, address financial constraints, and explore sustainable funding strategies. Additionally, enhancing communication channels, both online and offline, can foster better engagement between party leaders and members, contributing to a more transparent and participatory internal environment.
3. To strengthen internal party processes, particularly in policy development, it is recommended that political parties establish and document formal structures for policy development. Parties should ensure inclusivity at all levels and adherence to the provisions in the respective party constitution. For example, Political parties can enhance policy development by involving diverse stakeholders, such as party members, experts, civil society organisations, and community representatives, and by implementing consultative mechanisms like town hall meetings and online surveys to ensure that policies reflect the broad spectrum of societal needs and interests. This inclusivity should extend to regional and local branches, promoting diverse inputs in developing policy documents. By adopting transparent and inclusive policy development processes, parties can better align with their members' diverse needs and perspectives.

4. The parties should prioritise internal democracy to ensure that every member seeking to pursue any position within or affiliated with the party can exercise their civil rights. This approach will diminish the influence of political godfathers and potentially alleviate internal conflicts within the party by reducing the undue influence of powerful individuals and mitigating internal conflicts, thereby promoting a fairer and more inclusive political environment.
5. Internal party democracy is crucial for a healthy democratic system. To address challenges related to internal democracy, political parties should strictly adhere to their constitutions and guidelines for internal leadership selection. There should be a commitment to conducting regular, free, and fair internal party elections, ensuring the process is transparent and accessible to all members. More so, parties should actively involve women, youths, and persons with disabilities in decision-making processes, promoting a more inclusive and representative leadership structure.
6. To strengthen the control of party resources and minimise external influence, it is recommended that political parties adhere to the financial management provisions outlined in their constitutions. Parties should establish collective decision-making processes for fund management and ensure accountability to relevant organs. Transparency in financial transactions is essential for maintaining the integrity of the party. Additionally, efforts should be made to minimise undue influence by individuals or groups, fostering a more democratic and independent party structure.
7. Political parties should prioritise the development and effective implementation of strategic plans. While many parties acknowledge having strategic plans, there is a need for greater transparency and accessibility of these documents. This is crucial for effective party operations because transparency and accessibility of the party's strategic plans ensure that all members of the party understand the party's objectives, priorities, and strategies and hold party leaders accountable for their decisions and actions in line with the established strategies; actively contribute ideas, feedback, and support; and ensure that the party remains dynamic and responsive to changing circumstances. Prioritising transparency and accessibility of strategic plans enables political parties to operate more effectively, fostering unity, accountability, participation, and adaptability within the organisation. Hence, parties should focus on winning elections and elaborate on the specific strategies and mechanisms they employ to achieve this goal. Regular reviews of strategic plans and their alignment with organisational priorities can contribute to more dynamic and responsive party operations.
8. Political parties should devise sustainable strategies to sustain active and diverse engagement between electoral cycles. This involves organising regular meetings, strategy sessions, and capacity-building initiatives for members. Additionally, parties should explore initiatives aimed at community development, which enhances their image and connection with the electorate. Emphasising continuous communication and dialogue with party members is crucial in sustaining political engagement. This ongoing interaction fosters a sense of involvement and ownership among members, keeping them engaged and invested in the party's activities beyond elections. It also allows parties to solicit feedback, address concerns, and adapt their strategies based on their members' evolving needs and priorities, thereby ensuring long-term relevance and effectiveness.

Membership/Supporters Profile

1. Collaboration between party leaders and election management bodies is crucial to improving the transparency, efficiency, and inclusiveness of political party membership processes. Establishing and enforcing robust verification protocols for maintaining accurate membership records is essential. This involves implementing systematic processes for regular updates and verification to detect and rectify issues like duplicated or fabricated names. One way to achieve this is through regular audits of membership records. These audits can be conducted by independent auditing firms or internal audit teams appointed by the party leadership. All membership records should be thoroughly reviewed during the audit process to identify discrepancies or irregularities. For example, auditors can cross-reference membership lists with voter registration databases or conduct interviews with members to verify their identities. When issues are identified during the audit process, prompt action should be taken to rectify them. This may involve removing duplicate or fraudulent names from the membership database, updating contact information for existing members, and conducting outreach efforts to confirm the legitimacy of questionable memberships. In addition, measures should be implemented to prevent similar issues from recurring, such as implementing stricter verification procedures for new membership applications.

involves accelerating efforts to digitise the membership registration process and making online registration portals more accessible and user-friendly. Additionally, robust verification mechanisms should be instituted for online registrations to ensure the credibility of the digitalised registration process. Leveraging technologies like blockchain can provide secure and reliable storage of party membership data.
2. Parties should enhance the digitalisation and verification of online registration processes. This
3. Furthermore, parties should consider conducting demographic surveys to identify underrepresented groups and tailor recruitment strategies accordingly to attract new members and promote diversity within parties. This includes a mix of physical campaigns, canvassing, and effective utilisation of traditional and social media. Strengthening grassroots mobilization efforts will contribute to building a more engaged membership base. Additionally, political parties should actively implement and monitor women and youth recruitment and development programmes to ensure inclusivity and representation.
4. To enhance the effectiveness of volunteer management within political parties, it is essential to establish clear structures for recruiting, training, and managing volunteers. One way to achieve this is by utilising various online platforms for volunteer engagement, such as social media platforms, dedicated volunteer management software, and party websites with volunteer registration portals. These platforms could facilitate communication, task assignment, and coordination among volunteers and party officials.

Moreover, political parties can allow non-members to contribute, thus expanding their pool of potential volunteers and promoting inclusivity. Non-members can participate in voter outreach, campaign events, fundraising efforts, and policy research. By embracing online platforms for volunteer engagement and involving non-members in volunteer activities, political parties can strengthen their volunteer management practices and maximise the impact of their grassroots efforts. This approach fosters greater engagement, participation, and collaboration, ultimately contributing to the success and vitality of political party operations.

5. Political parties need regular capacity-building workshops for their officials, leaders, and members. These workshops should cover record-keeping, volunteer management, and effective communication strategies, among others.
6. There is a need for political parties to strengthen their internal and external communication structures by embracing modern communication technologies and ensuring functional websites and effective use of social media for better communication.

Strengthening Political Party Integrity in Legislative Processes

In the area of the legislative processes, the integrity of political parties plays a vital role in upholding democratic principles and ensuring effective governance. As such, it is imperative to establish robust measures to strengthen political party integrity within legislative frameworks. This section presents a set of recommendations focused on enhancing the integrity of political parties in legislative processes.

1. Political parties should introduce stringent measures within party constitutions to discourage party-switching among elected legislators. These measures could include penalties such as suspension or expulsion from the party for officials who defect without valid justifications. Additionally, parties could impose restrictions on defectors, such as barring them from holding leadership positions or running for office under the party's banner in future elections. By implementing these specific measures, parties can reinforce their commitment to their ideologies and discourage opportunistic behaviour among elected officials.
2. Political parties should implement reporting mechanisms that mandate legislators, particularly those from smaller parties, to regularly update their respective parties regarding their legislative activities. These updates should include their voting records on key bills and motions, participation in committee meetings and debates, any proposed amendments they have introduced, and alignment with party positions on significant issues. This initiative will facilitate effective tracking and coordination of party positions within the National Assembly.

3. Political parties, civil society, and other stakeholders should advocate for transparency in legislators' voting behaviour by pushing to publish voting records. This will enable parties and the public to verify the alignment of elected officials with party positions during the legislative process.

This enables parties to hold their members accountable and ensures policy advocacy and decision-making consistency. Similarly, transparency in legislators' voting behaviour could promote accountability and enhance trust in the political system because it enables citizens to monitor the actions of their elected representatives and evaluate whether they are representing their interests effectively. Hence, this transparency fosters greater civic engagement and empowers voters to make informed decisions during elections.

Furthermore, transparency in voting behaviour contributes to the overall transparency and integrity of the legislative process. For example, when voting records are publicly available, it reduces the likelihood of clandestine deals or hidden agendas influencing legislative outcomes. Instead, it promotes openness and accountability, reinforcing democratic principles of transparency and accountability in governance.

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4. Political parties should collaborate with relevant stakeholders to advocate for electoral reforms, addressing challenges associated with party-switching and ensuring the adherence of elected officials to party platforms throughout their tenure. Some key challenges associated with party-switching that electoral reforms should address include the potential for elected officials to prioritise personal interests over party platforms, leading to a lack of accountability. Moreover, frequent party-switching can erode trust in the political system, causing voter disillusionment and apathy. Additionally, it disrupts party dynamics and cohesion, hindering the development and implementation of coherent policies. Furthermore, party-switching may confer an unfair advantage on individuals, undermining the fairness and integrity of the electoral process. Lastly, it wastes resources invested in election campaigns, as voters may feel betrayed by representatives' decision to switch parties.

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5. Encourage parties, especially smaller ones, to explore innovative strategies for holding legislative representatives accountable. This may involve setting up internal committees, establishing communication protocols, and organising regular meetings to ensure alignment with party principles for holding legislative representatives accountable.

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6. Explore avenues to reduce the reliance of political parties, particularly smaller ones, on elected representatives for funding. In addition to putting financial pressure on elected officials, which can lead to corruption, relying on elected representatives to fund party activities can lead to undue influence and favouritism in party decision-making. This can undermine democratic principles of fairness and equality within the party, as the preferences of wealthy donors or influential members may sway decisions. This could entail exploring alternative funding sources, such as government financing based on objective criteria, grassroots fundraising efforts, member dues, or implementing transparent financial systems within party structures to promote financial autonomy.

Capacity Building

1. Political parties should prioritise developing robust internal capacity-building initiatives, including regular workshops, training programmes, and conferences for leaders, staff, and legislators. This should enhance skills in leadership, communication, party financing, and other critical areas.
2. Political parties should explore diverse funding sources to support training programmes, including partnerships with development partners, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and international organisations. This can help overcome financial constraints and ensure a broader reach of capacity-building initiatives.
3. There is a need to revitalise or establish capacity-building institutes. Parties without internal training institutes should consider establishing them, modelled after successful initiatives like the People's Democratic Institute (PDI) and the APC Governors Forum. Existing institutes, such as PDI, should be revitalised to serve as intellectual bases for research into good governance and national development policies.
4. Political parties in Nigeria need to become more professional and specialised. This requires identifying specific areas for improvement, like party administration, financial management, fundraising, and campaign strategies, and encouraging parties to leverage the expertise of their members and seek outside help when necessary. This will make parties more organised, skilled, and focused, ultimately enhancing their quality and effectiveness.
5. Parties need to advocate for sustained support from donors and international organisations for capacity-building initiatives. Highlighting the importance of ongoing technical support for political parties, particularly those facing challenges, will help overcome the observed 'donor fatigue' and ensure the continued strengthening of democratic institutions.
6. Collaborate with international partners and organisations to provide more opportunities for political party members to participate in international training programmes. This can broaden their perspectives and contribute to the overall development of party leaders and members.
7. Parties are advised to implement regular monitoring and evaluation processes to assess the effectiveness of capacity-building initiatives. Through these processes, parties can identify areas for improvement, refine their training programmes, and ensure that the skills acquired translate into meaningful contributions to party development and governance.

Innovative Ways of Party Financing

An increasing number of countries are adopting policies to subsidise political parties through their tax systems or by directly providing goods and services. This support is primarily intended to facilitate the essential functions of parties, including policy formulation, public education, and fostering connections between society and the government. Such state backing for political parties is nearly ubiquitous in liberal democracies (Caramani, 2017).

Respondents generally concur that established parties enjoy a significant financial advantage over smaller parties in terms of accessing public funding, which can potentially foster the development of cartel parties. Cartel parties emerge when collaborating parties leverage state resources to ensure collective survival (Katz and Mair, 1995, p. 5). To address concerns about corruption and the undue influence of wealthy individuals (“moneybags”), some interviewees advocate for government funding arrangements for political parties. However, they acknowledge that public financing might inadvertently diminish a party’s incentive to attract members and perpetuate the status quo by favouring larger, entrenched parties. Various options for government funding or subsidies for political parties have been suggested. One proposal is allocating funds based on the number of seats won in the National Assembly, a model practised in federal states like Germany. It is emphasised that such funds must be utilised properly and subjected to rigorous auditing.

Additionally, some interviewees advocate for government funding for candidates instead of political parties, with funding amounts tied to the candidate’s ability to raise funds independently. For instance, the presidential public funding programme in the United States provides eligible candidates with federal government funds to cover campaign expenses in both primary and general elections. Others recommend exploring additional funding and capacity-building support from entities like the European Union. However, constitutional restrictions prohibit parties from receiving external funding, and concerns about the risks associated with parties soliciting funds from outside Nigeria have been raised. Additional recommendations for enhancing political party funding include expanding the membership base, encouraging members to pay dues, and promoting donations to campaigns from individuals and corporate entities, a practice observed in the United States.

Some of the specific guidelines for political finance systems that parties could find useful include the following:

- Restrictions and limits on private contributions
- Balance between private and public funding
- Restrictions on the use of state resources
- Fair criteria for the allocation of public financial support
- Spending limits for campaigns
- Requirements that increase transparency of party funding and credibility of financial reporting
- Independent regulatory mechanisms and appropriate sanctions for legal violations

Given the above, the study recommends that:

1. Political parties should diversify their funding sources beyond traditional methods, such as selling forms and levying membership fees. Embracing innovative funding avenues like online campaigns, crowdfunding, and partnering with the private sector can enhance financial sustainability. Additionally, parties should reassess the membership dues structure to ensure transparency, reasonableness, and effective collection. Implementing measures to incentivise timely payments and communicating the significance of financial membership can encourage compliance and foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among members.
2. Advocating for a new regulatory body to enforce campaign finance laws is crucial to tackling money's influence in politics. This body would investigate and punish any violations, ensuring everyone follows the rules. Additionally, there's a need to push for full disclosure of political party donations and spending. This transparency helps citizens make informed decisions about which parties to support. It's also important to close loopholes in laws that allow for hidden or untraceable donations and to limit contributions from corporations and special interest groups. The aim is to create a fair playing field where parties compete based on their ideas, not just their finances. These measures will safeguard the integrity of the democratic process and promote fairness and accountability in the political system.
3. Political parties should develop transparent policies that outline how funds will be utilised per the political party objectives. These policies could include:
 - Delineating how funds will be allocated across different areas such as campaign expenses, party administration, staff salaries, outreach programmes, and policy research.
 - Establishing clear guidelines for fundraising activities, specifying permissible sources of funds, and setting limits on individual contributions to prevent undue influence from wealthy donors
 - Implementing robust financial reporting mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability in fund utilisation. This could involve regular audits by independent auditors and publishing financial reports accessible to party members and the public.

- Incorporating anti-corruption measures into the party's financial policies, including strict penalties for corruption or misuse of funds.
 - Ensuring that fund utilisation aligns with the party's objectives, such as promoting social welfare, advancing democratic values, and supporting policies that benefit its constituents.
4. Political parties must prioritise transparency and accountability in financial management. Implementing robust financial management systems, conducting regular independent audits of party finances, and making financial reports accessible to members are essential. This approach ensures adherence to financial regulations, fosters transparency, and builds trust among members and stakeholders, ensuring efficient fund utilisation in line with party objectives. Moreover, it facilitates prompt identification and rectification of any mismanagement or irregularities, underscoring the party's commitment to accountability.
 5. Civil society organisations should advocate for policies that guarantee equal resource access for ruling and opposition parties. This could involve advocating for capacity-building initiatives organised by either the government or independent groups to enhance the organisational and campaign capabilities of political parties, particularly smaller ones. Other policies to ensure equitable resource access for all parties include public funding for political parties, which is allocated based on objective criteria like their electoral performance or the number of party members, and strict enforcement of regulations governing private funding for political parties to prevent undue influence from wealthy individuals. This entails transparency requirements for donations and imposing spending limits, preventing parties with access to substantial funds from gaining an unfair advantage.
 6. In addition, the National Assembly should enact legal frameworks to prevent government officials from misappropriating state resources for party activities, thereby creating a level playing field for all parties and promoting fair competition in the political arena.
 7. Political parties must develop comprehensive, long-term financial sustainability plans that transcend reliance on sporadic donations or election-related funding. Exploring income-generating activities, establishing endowment funds, and encouraging regular financial contributions from members can establish a stable and sustainable financial base.
 8. Organising training sessions for party officials on effective financial management is essential to equip party leaders with the necessary skills to manage finances, develop budgets, and ensure compliance with financial regulations. This will contribute to improved financial stewardship within political parties.

Communications

1. Political parties should prioritise the development of well-articulated communication structures. These structures must encompass both internal and external communication channels. Clear policies and procedures for communication should be established, ensuring that information is disseminated effectively and transparently. Parties should designate responsible individuals, such as publicity secretaries, to manage and enhance the public image through various communication channels.
2. Parties with existing communication structures need to assess and enhance their operational efficiency. Training and capacity-building programmes for communication personnel, particularly publicity secretaries, should be implemented. Also, regular evaluations of the communication processes should be conducted to identify areas for improvement and ensure that these structures operate optimally.
3. Political parties should establish clear and transparent communication policies. These policies must outline guidelines for the approval and vetting of communications before publication. Ensuring transparency in communication processes will help maintain consistency in messaging and prevent the spread of misinformation.
4. Political parties should prioritise developing and maintaining functional and regularly updated official websites. These platforms are crucial hubs for disseminating party information, policies, and activities. Regular updates will keep members and the public informed and engaged, contributing to transparency and accessibility.
5. To ensure fair access to media outlets, parties should advocate for equal opportunities, addressing any perceived bias towards larger parties. Collaborative initiatives within the political landscape can promote equal media access.
6. In addition, parties should utilise information and communication technologies, like social media platforms, sustainably and consistently. Implementing continuous and meaningful engagement strategies with members and the public is crucial. Leveraging modern communication technologies such as social media, email, SMS, and video conferencing can help parties reach a wider audience. Providing training programmes on technology use for party members will ensure proficiency and consistency in communication strategies.
7. While recognising freedom of speech as a constitutional right, it is recommended that political parties exercise caution in their communication strategies and public statements. Given the limitations on this right, political parties should avoid gratuitous insults, hate speech, or actions that disrupt public safety and order.

Electoral Campaign

1. Political parties should develop and implement clear policies or guidelines for candidate recruitment. This process should be well-defined, transparent, and inclusive, ensuring qualified and suitable individuals are identified for candidature. Special committees dedicated to candidate recruitment can be established to enhance the efficiency of this process.
2. Existing communication structures within parties should undergo assessment and improvement to enhance operational efficiency. This includes systematic and articulated campaign planning, incorporating innovative approaches, and utilising data-driven insights. Parties should regularly review and update their campaign strategies to adapt to changing political landscapes and voter preferences.
3. Political parties should establish clear guidelines for campaign management, addressing the roles and responsibilities of various levels within the party hierarchy. A centralised approach can be adopted to coordinate national, state, and local campaigns effectively. Mechanisms for training aspirants and candidates on campaign strategies should be instituted, promoting uniformity and competence.
4. During election campaigns, parties should actively promote synergy between candidates and the party hierarchy. While candidates may have responsibilities for managing their campaigns, a strong interface between candidates and party leadership should be encouraged to avoid conflicts and ensure a unified and effective campaign strategy.
5. Political parties should allocate resources for the sustainable monitoring of polling places during elections. This includes recruiting and training polling agents, volunteers, and party members to systematically and accurately monitor the electoral process. Collaboration with other parties in the form of 'Situation Rooms' can enhance the monitoring capabilities, and detailed reports should be produced after each election.
6. Political parties should actively promote their ideologies as a key reason for garnering support during elections. Ideological clarity can be powerful, especially for smaller parties with limited financial resources. Emphasising the party's values, goals, and consistency in commitment can resonate with voters and build a stronger foundation of support.
7. Parties should invest in effective communication of their ideologies through various channels, including party symbols, slogans, and manifestos. Leveraging traditional and modern communication platforms can help parties reach a broader audience and ensure voters understand and connect with the party's values.





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The report is part of a broader project of the Kukah Centre under the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN II) Programme: Component 3 – Support to Political Parties. The context of the report recognises that the linkage functions performed by political parties mean that the health of a democracy is determined by the health of the political party system. This requires political parties to have structures which are participatory and inclusive, transparent, and value-driven, with the capacity to provide logical and evidence-based solutions to societal issues.

The scope of the report focuses on the ideological and policy positions of parties, party organisational structure, internal party processes and democracy, membership and funding, capacity building, party communication structure, and electoral campaigns. The Kukah Centre worked closely with political parties to understand the challenges and gaps in these key thematic areas to identify strategic policies that will ensure the establishment of a common understanding towards policies designed to promote accountability, inclusivity, and constructive engagement that can drive political reforms in Nigeria.

Overall, the study aims to improve the functions and administration of political parties and to support the growth of democracy in Nigeria that is largely acceptable to political party members, Nigerian citizens, and the international community.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA 2023



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