**A SEMINAR PAPER PRESENTED**

***BY***

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**Abstract**

 This paper examines party politics and intergroup relations in Nigeria. Since the inception of intergroup relations as a recent theme in African and Nigerian historiography, most pioneer scholars who stimulated interest in the field would appear to have circumvented its political angle. In the study of intergroup relations, thus far historians have been extremely wary about venturing into direct discussion of political relations between groups in the period before and after 1914. They rather concentrate their focus on the analysis of its form, pattern and content as well as the ways and manner it manifests between groups, creating thereby the impression that it is in the economic sphere that intergroup relations can be most meaningfully studied. The aim of this study therefore is to reappraise the dynamics of intergroup relations with the context of partisan politics (political relations) as against the preponderant economic theme that had hither to held sway to balance the historiography of Nigeria pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial intergroup relations. The methodology in this study is library research.

**Keywords:** Party politics, political party and intergroup relations.

**Introduction**

 The geo-political entity defined as Nigeria remained the most enduring hangover of the British colonialism. Before the 1914 popular amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates each of the over 250 ethnic groups that make up Nigerian state existed to some extend independently and distinctively in culture and tradition, but not that they were not interacting with one another in favourable terms. What happened in the 1914 episode of the Northern and Southern unification was reminiscence of a marriage, which may not be so pleasant but cannot be easily divorced. By bringing these sovereign kingdoms, empires and city states together, a new system upon which they will be administered as a single entity was introduced which is the present day party politics. This new political order has its own features and carries its own style of bringing the different group together. This study covers the new political order or partisan politics since its formation in 1922 and how it promoted intergroup relations and also discouraged intergroup relations on the other hand.

 The British displayed their political craft by introducing federalism. Arising from the problems inherent with federalism or federal arrangement, federal character principle was introduced as a therapy. The degree to which the policy has achieved its fundamental historic objectives in terms of intergroup relations and nation building in Nigeria casts serious doubt on scholarship and therefore demands analytical academic exploration. Research on party politics and intergroup relations involves the study of many psychological phenomena related to intergroup processes including social identity, political identity, prejudice, group dynamics and conformity among many others.

 Research in this area has been shaped by many notable figures and continues to provide empirical insights into modern political activities, social issues such as social inequality, political marginalization, domination and control, minority and majority issues, resource control and discrimination. As Michael (2019) opined, partisan politics has promoted intergroup relations since its formation in 1922 on one hand and has discouraged intergroup relations on the other hand.

**Conceptual Clarification**

Intergroup relations refer to interaction between individuals in different social groups, and to interactions taking place between the groups themselves collectively. (Muzafer-Sherif, 1966).

According to Ball (1981) Political party may be principally defined by their common aims. They seek political power either singly or in cooperation with other political parties. This point is also shared by Joseph Schumpeter who opines that the first and foremost aim of each political party is to prevail over the others in order to get into power to stay in it. To Sorgwe (2018) Political party is a group of persons who believe in a political ideology and who make group efforts to win and control the government of the country, state or local government or for the furtherance of that ideology. Odedele and Egotanwa (2010) defined political party as a group of people who share the same ideas, aims or objectives for the purpose of contesting and winning an election in order to control the government of a particular country. Sorgwe (2008) also added that politics is the science and art of governance putting the two words together; it simply means that party politics is process of providing governance in a country through political party.

Furthermore, Afigbo (1987) states that intergroup relationship is a multifaceted and dynamic concept. Among its more common facets are the political (which might be war like or peaceful) the economic and technological, the cultural (which later include art, dance and music, marriage, customs, modes of dress etc). Other facets include interaction between legal and judicial systems, language and folk lore, religion, philosophy and cosmology.

Okpe (2006) posits that intergroup relations are contact and interaction between groups occupying autonomous regions. From Okpe’s definition, intergroup relation is usually between two or more sovereign groups, and it must be as a result of human contact and must be mutually beneficial. Finally, intergroup relations cover all facets of human society; it is characterized by economic, political and socio-cultural interactions, social and national consciousness, ethnic mobilization, domination and control, struggle over identity, power and economic resources, feeling of solidarity, protection and sharing of socio-cultural values and pursuit of ethnic interest especially in a multi-ethnic society like Nigeria.

**Origin of Party Politics in Nigeria**

There was no country known as Nigeria during the late 18th century and early 19th century. This does not mean that there were no people or groups in the territory, which later became Nigeria. Michael (2019) opined that various communities and kingdoms among them the Tiv, Nupe, Jukun, Angas, Biron, Idoma and Ankpa in the present day Northern Nigeria, the Egba, Egbado, Ijebu, Oyo, Ekiti, Apamu in present day Western Nigeria and the Ijo, Ikwerre, Efik, Ibibio, Oron, Kalabari in the present day Southern Nigeria had settled in the territories for several centuries before European encounter.

Each group prior the incursion of Europeans and the Berlin conference of 1884-1885 were independent and sovereign, devoid of any iota of political marginalization and domination, economic exploitation and socio-cultural sentiment. Each group related with the Europeans on the basis of trade in the 15th century, trans-Atlantic slave trade and later the “Legitimate trade”. But the foundation of the present day Nigeria was laid in 1884-1885 Berlin conference.

Orugbani (2005) opined that “during the Anglo-French rivalry, which preceded the 1884-1885 Berlin conference, the British counsel had succeeded to obtain treaties from Delta and other coastal chiefs placing their territories under British protection. Similarly, treaties were obtained from the chief of the communities on either bank of the Niger and from Fulani Sultans of Sokoto and Gwandu. British representatives were able to claim successful that the British were supreme on the lower Niger and in the oil River. By the understanding, the British now has the legal right to protect and administer these places and almost all these communities upon which these treaties were signed existed as independent and sovereign kingdoms and states. All the kingdoms, communities and states in Southern parts of the Niger; the Ijo, Kalabari, Ogoni, Efik, Ikwerre and the Igbo communities were brought together under one umbrella “Southern protectorate”. The same applied to the north and the colony of Lagos. The annexation of these kingdoms into one umbrella is what we called the first Amalgamation (Galadima, 2012).

However, in 1914, the British further unified the northern and southern protectorate to what is known today as Nigeria. With the unification of Lagos colony with southern protectorate and later the Amalgamation of northern and southern protectorate by Lord Lugard in 1914, a new system upon which they will be administered as a single entity was introduced which is the present day party politics. This new political order has its own features and carries its own style of bringing the different group together. As Michael (2019) rightly said “partisan politics has promoted in intergroup relations since its formation in 1922 on one hand and has discouraged intergroup relation on the other hand.

 **Party Politics and Intergroup Relations in Nigeria**

Appadorai (1982) has identified a number of factors that lead to the formation of political parties as noted below; protest movements, religious groups, sheer community loyalty, leadership qualities, clubs and associations etc. Solomon Ikunga (2012) opined that the earliest political associations in Nigeria started like a protest movement.The first was the people’s union which was organized in 1908 by two leading African doctors in Lagos aimed at protecting Indigenous rights and opposing the change of land tenure system in southern Nigeria.

Another political association that fits into protest movement was the National Council of British West Africa by Caseley Hayfold of Ghana who moved educated elites from Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Gambia to a conference in Accra in 1920. However the first genuine political party in Nigeria was the Nigeria National Democracy Party (NNDP) founded by Herbeart Samuel Macaulay on June 24, 1923 with Egerton Shyngle as president. The party was virtually limited to the politics of Lagos especially with the elections of the legislative council and Lagos town council (Michael, 2019).

 In 1934 a number of young men founded the Lagos youth Movement (LYM) which was renamed Nigeria Youth Movement (NYM) and was registered as a political party. The NYM put an end to the fifteen years electoral dominance of the NNDP in the politics of Lagos when she won the election to the Lagos Town Council and all three seats in the legislative Council.

To prepare for the 1938 election, the NYM choose an executive committee members and officers including Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe to manage the affairs of the party and ensure victory in the forth coming elections (Alapiki, 2012). By 21 October, 1938 another general elections held in Nigeria and the NYM won the four elected seats in the legislative council, defeating the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NDPP) which had earlier dominated the political scene of Lagos. Nevertheless, the nature of party politics was to ensure full involvement of all Nigerians in the quest for self rule which in turn reduced ethnic sentiments, political domination and promote inter group relations

1. **1946 Elections in Nigeria.**

 The 1946 Elections in Nigeria were the first and only election held under the 1946 constitution of Arthur Richards which had few changes made in the electoral system. By this time, the 1946 Richards constitution had changed the political terrain of the country by the virtue of the creation of three regional governments. This led to the formaion of regional parties like the Northern People’s Congress (NPC), Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), NCNC and AG. Following the effectiveness of the regionalization of Richards constitution and the formation of different political parties under the leadership of literate Nigerians from different regions, the political party system took a different dimension. Political leaders from different regions sought to control their various regions hence the political parties became regional base and the root of ethnicity deepened which eventually impacted negatively on intergroup relations in Nigeria.

At the release of the election results, NPC won almost all the seats in the Northern House of Assembly. NCNC also had a smooth sailing in winning the majority of the seat to control the Eastern House of Assembly and the AG won 38 of the seats while the remaining 38 seats were shared by NCNC- 24 seats, Ibadan People’s Parliament (IPP) -6 seats, Ofu Benin -3 seats, Ondo Improvement League – 2 seats, and Independent Candidates – 3 seats (Michael, 2019). Dr. Azikiwe wanted to go to Federal House of Representatives through the NCNC in Lagos province but could not succeed since his party NCNC was not in majority and the minority and independent candidates were divided about his candidature. Because of this development, Dr. Azikiwe resigned his Lagos seat and blames it on Yoruba and Awolowo accusing them of betraying the Igbo nation. This heightened ethnic politics in Nigeria as majority of Igbo people in the East interpreted it to mean an affront on an Igbo leader. To Michael (2019) this claim was not justifiable since some Igbos like Chief Dennis Osadebe and Chief Frank Oputu Otutu enjoyed the Federal House of Assembly seat through the Western regional House of Assembly. The next political event in Nigeria was the 1954 general election which held between October and December, 1954.

1. **1959 General Elections.**

The development of party politics in Nigeria is always linked to ethnic politics. It is on record that the commencement of party politics witnessed the formation and control of political parties along regional lines. Mohammed (2003) argued that the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a cultural group of Yoruba descendants of Oduduwa metamorphosed into Action Group in March 1951. Similarly, Jammiyar Mutanen Arewa, another cultural group based in Northern Nigeria, transformed into the Northern People’s Congress in October 1951. The National Council for Nigeria and Cameroons (later, of Nigerian Citizens) founded in 1944 as first national political party became bogged down into the affair’s of Igbo State Unions based in Eastern Nigeria. Nnoli (1978) states that the leaders of these parties were from the dominant ethnic groups of each area. While Chief Obafemi Awolowo led the Action Group, Sir Ahmadu Bello headed Northern People’s Congress. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe led the National Council of Nigerian Citizen. The supporters of each of the parties were from Hausa-Fulani (North), Yoruba (West) and Igbo (East) pre-dominantly.

 The minority ethnic groups who were to support these three parties were instead being supported by political parties from the regions other than their own and thus promote intergroup relations. As Idang (2005) observed, the Action Group supported the minority groups of the middle Belt and the East while the NCNC supported the NEPU of Aminu Kano and the NPC supported minority group of Rivers Niger Delta Congress. As a result, in the 1959 general election, each of the parties captured power in its region of origin.

It was only through a coalition agreement that a central government was formed between the NPC and NCNC on October 1, 1960. From this pattern of party formation (leadership structures and support base), the struggle for political power became interpreted in ethnic terms. The formation of the Federal House of Assembly with Northern Majority further escalated the heightened ethnic sentiment brewing in the country. The failure of the northern majority in the House to support the independence motion moved by Anthony Enahoro of the Western region implanted suspicion in the minds of the Western and Eastern political leaders and further stained the intergroup relationship between the north and the south.

 Jose (1987) is of the view that the activities of political parties became violent first following the humiliation meted on Northern leaders in House of Representative who disagreed with the independent motion moved by NCNC and AG members. When the AG sponsored a public lecture in Kano, Hausa – Fulani leaders of the NPC instigated a protest in retaliation for their humiliation in the south. This provoked violence which turned bloody leaving many southerners dead and their properties destroyed. By this development, party activities ignited ethnic hatred between southern & northern Nigeria and it again impacted negatively on intergroup relations in Nigeria. Nevertheless, party politics promoted intergroup relations in Nigeria as it provided a platform for political leaders of different ethnic backgrounds to meet and chat a new course for the country.

1. **The 1979 General Elections.**

In 1979 after military intervention which lasted between 1966 and 1979, the ban on political activities was lifted by Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo.

Five political parties were registered among many political parties that sprang up.

**The parties registered were;**

1. Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP) headed by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe.

2. Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo

3. Great Nigerian People’s Party (GNPP) led by Alhaji Waziri Abraham.

4. People’s Redemption Party (PRP) led by Alhaji Mohammed Amino Kano

5. National Party of Nigeria (NPN) led by Alhaji Shehu Shagari

Source: Michael (2019).

 It is pertinent to note that the second republic party politics in Nigeria were the continuation of the first republic parties. The members were still regional based; they had no national objectives and they promoted regional hostility. Galadima (2012) opined that in 1979, when the first military regime left, all the political parties except the Great Nigerian People’s Party of Waziri Ibrahim and National Advance Party of Tunji Braithwaithe in 1983 had links with the defunct parties of the first Republic. Even though the creation of more states out of former regions and the formation of more political parties affected the regionalization of politics, the presence of Dr. Azikiwe (NPP) and chief Awolowo (UPN) did not eliminate such politics especially in the Eastern and Western areas. It was only in the former Northern region that such politics was reduce and this was because of factors such as the death of Ahmadu Bello, the control of federal government by northerners through military rule and the creation of many states in the region. This explained as one of the reasons, the emergence of National Party of Nigeria (NPN) from a coalition of the rump of defunct NPC and faction of prescribed NCNC, NNDP, AG, NEPU, UMBC etc in 1979.The regional politics pitch Igbo-Yoruba-Hausa-Fulani against one another as the major ethnic groups in the struggle for power. This also impacted negatively on intergroup relations in Nigeria. The general election took place on August 11, 1979 and Alhaji Shehu Shagari was pronounced winner of the election by Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO). To Michael (2019) the crisis that emanated from the 1979 general election impacted negatively on intergroup relations in Nigeria as group interest superseded national interest resulting to mistrust.

**Performance at the election**

**1979 General Election Results**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Candidate** | **Party** | **Votes**  | **%** |
| Shehu Shagari  | NPN | 5,688,857 | 33.77 |
| Obafemi Awolowo | UPN | 4,916,551 | 29.18 |
| Nnamadi Azikiwe  | NPP | 2,822,523 | 16.75 |
| Aminu Kano  | PRP | 1,732,113 | 10.28 |
| Waziri Ibrahim | GNPP | 1,686,489 | 10.01 |
| **Total** | 16,846,533 | 100.00 |

**Source: Nohlen et al (1999).**

**d) The 1983 General Elections**

The intergroup relationship between the different ethnic groups in Nigeria changes in line with the transformation in the administrative structures of the country at every material time. During the 1983 general election, ethnic relations deteriorated due to large spread violence in almost all parts of the country. Dele Giwa (1985) “in the second republic, politics turned physical, not intellectual, warefare or other means. Political violence was on the increase. There were clashes and clashes. The NPN against the UPN, NPN against the NPP and NPN against GNPP, the NPN being the only recurring decimal in these political battles”.

It was also observed that each party had its own gang of thugs on their payroll. For instance, the Ikemba Front, Shagari Movement, Okpara Brigade among others was very confrontational in their actions. In the West, the youths adopted the act of destruction of lives and property as a hobby (Michael, 2019). This also impacted negatively on intergroup relations. It is important to state that inspite of the strained relationship due to political interest and ideological difference, party politics promoted intergroup relations. Political campaigns and rallies across the country by political parties also provided a platform for the people of the various groups to relate positively which in turn culminated to economic integration, political affiliations and socio-cultural ties.

 **RELEASE OF PRESIDENTIAL RESULT/SCORES**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Candidate and Party** | **Scores** |
| 1 | Alhaji Shehu Shagari (NPN) | 12, 081, 471 |
| 2 | Chief Obafemi Awolowo (UPN) | 7, 907, 209 |
| 3 | Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (NPP) | 3, 557, 113 |
| 4 | Alhaji Hassan Yusuf (PRP) | 968, 974 |
| 5 | Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim (GNPP) | 643, 805 |
| 6 | Mr. Tunji Braifuwaite (NAP) | 271, 524 |

**Source: Otoghagua (2007).**

**e) June 12 1993 Election in Nigeria**

 Again the military interrupted the democratic process in 1983, but by 1992, the military regime under Gen. Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (IBB) planned a transitional process to democratic government (Ugboajab, 2012). Presidential elections were held in Nigeria on 12 June 1993, the first since the 1983 military coup ended the country’s second republic. This time, two party systems were adopted. The National Republican Convention (NRC) which produced Alhaji Bashir Tofa and Social Democratic Party (SDP) produced Alhaji M.K.O Abiola as its presidential candidates were registered. At the dawn of the election, party members mapped out strategies and election methods to deliver their candidates.

It is pertinent to note that the 1993 election in Nigeria was devoid of any iota of ethnicity, religion, marginalization and domination. Nigerians across the 30 states structure voted based on political interest and love for the two candidates. Political campaigns and values across the country by political parties provided a platform for Nigerians to relate positively which impacted positively on intergroup relations, economic integration, political affiliations and socio-cultural ties. The unofficial result of the election- though not declared by the National Electoral Commission (NEC) - indicated a victory for Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), who defeated Bashir Tofa of the National Republican Convention (NRC) even in his own state-Kano. The winner of the election was thus never declared as the elections were annulled by IBB, citing electoral irregularities. The annulment led to protests and political unrest, including the resignation of IBB and a weak interior civilian government, and culminated in the continuation of military rule in the country with Sani Abacha ascendary to power as the military head of state via a bloodless coup later in the year (Campbell, 1994).

T here was series of violent protests in July 1993 in the South-west region following the annulment. It is estimated that security forces killed over 100 people while quelling riots. The Igbo population in Lagos were also reported to have fled to the eastern region as the tension was palpable. This impacted negatively on intergroup relations in Nigeria.

**f) The 1999 General Elections**

On Tuesday 9th June, 1998, Gen. Abdusalam Abubakar was appointed the military head of state and commander-in-chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces, by the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) following the tragic death of General Sani Abacha on June 8, 1998. On August 7 1998, the acclaimed winner of the June 12, 1993 presidential election, Chief M.K.O Abiola died in mysterious circumstances. His death brought an end to the unending demand for that mandate, and the nation settled for a new course of transition to civil rule (Otoghagua, 2007).

Presidential elections were held in Nigeria on 27 February 1999. These were the first elections since the 1993 military coup, and the first elections of the fourth Nigerian Republic. The result was a victory for Olusegun Obasanjo of the People’s Democratic Party, who defeated Olu Falae, who was running on a Joint Alliance for Democracy-All People’s Party ticket. The 1999 elections provided a platform for political leaders of different ethnic backgrounds to meet, visit the 36 states structure and chat a new course for the country. These Political activities impacted positively on intergroup relations in Nigeria. As political leaders entered into alliance with each other outside their zones, states, region and even political ideologies and party links. Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu of Ebonyi state entered into alliance with a Yoruba candidate of AD and drops his presidential aspiration in 1999. Political campaigns and values across the country by political parties also provided a platform for Nigerians of various groups to interact and relate positively which in turn culminated to economic integration, political affiliations and socio-cultural ties.

**Performance at the Election**

**1999 General Election Results**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Candidate** | **Party** | **Votes**  | **%** |
| Olusegun Obasanjo  | PDP | 18,738,154 | 62.78 |
| Olu Falae  | AD-APP | 11,110,287 | 37.22 |
| **Total** | 29,848,441 | 100.00 |

**Source: African Elections Database**

**g) The 2003 General Elections**

The conduct of the election on 12th April, 2003 was not without stories. There were cases of intimidation, thugery, electoral malpractice and free use of fire arms in most of the polling centres. In Benin City, for example not less than 4 voters were killed. At Ibadan; a young man was caught by the police “Stuffy” a ballot box with fake voters cards (Otoghagua, 2007).

Otoghagua (2007) further stated that in Enugu state there was outbreak of violence between the supporters of PDP and the opposition parties and the police arrested fifteen people involved and recovered 10 locally made double barrel pump action guns and one Italian gun from them (suspects). In Bauchi state INEC ballot boxes were hijacked and ceased by six persons and they were later arrested. In Bayelsa state, some youths set the INEC office in Saghama to fire and destroyed vehicles. The election was peaceful in a very few states of the federation.

Despite all the problems, the results of the National Assembly election released by INEC shown that people’s Democratic Party led all other parties nationwide. The presidential election results released by INEC and as published by the Vanguard on April Wednesday 23, 2003 showed PDP won 28 states, NPP won 7 states and AD won Lagos states. On May 29 2003, the president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo with 36 state Governors were sworn in. The ceremony was held at the Eagle square Abuja.

 Again, the 2003 General elections impacted positively and negatively on intergroup relations in Nigeria. The party that won - PDP is national spread and enjoys the support of Nigerians from different zones and ethnic nationalities. PDP candidate in that election was a Yoruba man and his running mate was a Hausa-Fulani man. ANNP candidate was a Hausa-Fulani man, while his running mate was an Igbo man from Anambra state. Inspite of the violence, killings and electoral malpractice, free use of arms in most polling centres, party politics promoted intergroup relations in Nigeria as it provided a platform for political leaders of different ethnic nationalities to meet and chat a new course for the country.

**Performance at the election**

**2003 General Election Results**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Candidate** | **Party** | **Votes**  | **%** |
| Olusegun Obasanjo  | PDP | 24,456,140 | 61.94 |
| Muhammadu Buhari  | ANPP | 12,710,022 | 32.19 |
| Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu  | APGA  | 1,297,445 | 3.29 |
| Jim Nwobodo  | UNPP | 169,609 | 0.43 |
| Gani Fawehinmi | NCP | 161,333 | 0.41 |
| Sarah Jubril  | PAC | 157, 560 | 0.41 |
| Ike Nwachukwu  | NDP | 132, 997 | 0.34  |
| Chris Okotie | JP | 119,547 | 0.30 |
| Balarabe Musa | PRP | 100,765 | 0.26 |
| Arthur Nwankwo | PMP | 57,720 | 0.15 |
| Emmanuel Okereke | APLP | 26,921 | 0.07 |
| Kalu Idika Kalu | NNPP | 23,830 | 0.06 |
| Muhammadu Dikko Yusuf | MDJ | 21,403 | 0.05 |
| Yahaya Ndu | ARP | 11,565 | 0.03 |
| Abayomi Ferreira | DA | 6,937 | 0.07 |
| Tunji Braithwaite | NAP | 6,727 | 0.02 |
| Iheanyichukwu Godswill Nnaji | BNPP | 5,987 | 0.02 |
| Olapade Agoro | NAC | 5,756 | 0.01 |
| Pere Ajuwa | LDPN | 4,473 | 0.01 |
| Mojisola Adekunle Obasanjo | MMN | 3,757 | 0.01 |
|  **TOTAL** | **39,480,489** | **100.00** |

**Source: African Elections Database**

**h) The 2007 General Elections**

General elections were held in Nigeria on 21 April 2007 to elect the president and National Assembly members. Governorship and state assembly elections had been held on 14 April. Umaru Yar’Adua of the ruling People’s Democratic (PDP) won the highly controversial presidential elections, and was sworn in on 29 may 2007. Election observers from the European Union described the elections as “the worst they had ever seen anywhere in the world, with rampant vote rigging, violence, theft of ballot boxes and intimidation”.

 Umaru Yar’Adua was the PDP candidate and Goodluck Jonathan was his running mate. Muhammadu Buhari was the ANPP candidate while Mr. Edwin Ume-Ezeoke was his running mate. Other political parties contested and lost to the PDP candidate. Adebayo Adefarati, the candidate of AA, died shortly before the election on 29 March 2007. Again, the elections impacted positively and negatively on intergroup relations in Nigeria. Nigerians living outside their regions and states were attacked and killed; the Nigerian Military killed at least 25 suspected Islamic militants on 18 April, while battling extremists who attacked a police station on 17 April 2007 in Kano, days before the election (Salisu-Rabin, 2007).

 Shortly before voting began on 21st April there was an alleged attempt in Bayelsa state to kill Goodluck Jonathan, who was the PDP Vice presidential candidate and the governor of the state, as well as a failed attempt to destroy INEC headquarters in Abuja with a truck bomb (Al Jazeera 21st April 2007). Again, the 2007 General elections impacted positively on intergroup relations. The choice of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan as the Vice- presidential candidate of the PDP gave the minority Niger Delta Zone sense of belonging and they supported and voted for the Kastina state born PDP candidate. Political campaigns and rallies across the 36 states provided a platform for interaction, integration, socio-cultural ties and chat a new course for the country.

**Performance at the election**

**2007 General Election Results**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Candidate** | **Party** | **Votes** | **%** |
| Umaru Yar’Adua | PDP | 24,638,063 | 69.60 |
| Muhammadu Buhari | ANPP | 6,605,299 | 18.66 |
| Atiku Abubakar | AC | 2,637,484 | 7.45 |
| Orji Uzor Kalu | PPA | 608,803 | 1.72 |
| Attahiru Bafarawa | DPP | 289,224 | 0.82 |
| Chukwemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu | APGA | 155,947 | 0.44 |
| Pere Ajuwa | AD | 89,241 | 0.25 |
| Chris Okotie | FDP | 74,049 | 0.21 |
| Patrick Utomi | ADC | 50,849 | 0.14 |
| Asakarawon Olapere | NPC | 33,771 | 0.10 |
| Ambrose Owuru | HDP | 28,519 | 0.08 |
| Arthur Nwankwo | PMP | 24,164 | 0.07 |
| Emmanuel Okereke | ALP | 22,677 | 0.06 |
| Lawrence Adedoyin | APS | 22,409 | 0.06 |
| Habu Fari | NDP | 21,974 | 0.06 |
| Galtima Liman | NNPP | 21,665 | 0.04 |
| Maxi Okwu | CPP | 14,027 | 0.04 |
| Sunny Okogwu | RPN | 13,566 | 0.04 |
| Bartholomew Nnaji | BNP | 11,705 | 0.03 |
| Emmanuel Obajuwana | NCP | 8,229 | 0.2 |
| Olapade Agoro | NAC | 5,752 | 0.2 |
| Akpone Solomon | NMDP | 5,664 | 0.02 |
| Isa Odidi | ND | 5,408 | 0.02 |
| Aminu Abubakar | NUP | 4,355 | 0.01 |
| Mojisola Obansanjo | NMM | 4,309 | 0.02 |
| **TOTAL** |  | 35,397,517 | 100.00 |

**Source: African Election Database**

i) **The 2011 General Elections**

 Presidential elections were held in Nigeria on 16, April 2011, postponed from 9 April 2011. The election followed controversy as to whether a northerner or southerner should be allowed to become president given the tradition of rotating the top office between the north and the south after the death of Umaru Yar’Adua, a northerner, when Goodluck Jonathan, another southerner assumed the presidency. Again, Goodluck Jonathan and his running mate Namadi Sambo of the PDP defeated Muhammadu Buhari and his running mate Tunde Bakare of C.P.C. Other parties also contested.

Immediately after the election, widespread violence erupted in the northern, Muslim parts of the country. NYSC members posted to serve in Bauchi and most northern states were killed, properties destroyed. These impacted negatively on intergroup relations in Nigeria as parents refused to allow their children to serve (NYSC) in Northern parts of Nigeria. Jonathan was declared the winner on 19 April 2011.

According to Human Right Watch, the election sparked riots in Northern Nigeria. About 140 were killed in political violence before the election. The violence which turned bloody leaving many NYSC members, Igbo’s and other southerners dead and their properties destroyed. By this development, party politics ignited ethnic hatred between southern and northern Nigeria and impacted negatively on intergroup relations in Nigeria.

**Performance at the election**

**2011 General Election Results**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Candidate** | **Party** | **Vote** | **%** |
| Goodluck Jonathan | PDP | 22,495,187 | 58.87 |
| Muhammadu Buhari | CPC | 12,214,853 | 31.94 |
| Nuhu Ribadu | ACN | 2,079,151 | 5.44 |
| Ibrahim Shekarau | ANPP | 917,012 | 2.40 |
| Mahmud Waziri | PDC | 82,243 | 0.22 |
| Nwadike Chikezie | PMP | 56,248 | 0.15 |
| Lawson Igboanugo Aroh | PPA | 54,203 | 0.14 |
| Peter Nwaugwu | ADC | 51,682 | 0.14 |
| Iheanyichukwu Nnaji | BNPP | 47,272 | 0.12 |
| Chris Okotie | FDP | 34,331 | 0.09 |
| Dele Momodu | NCP | 26,376 | 0.07 |
| Akpona Solomon | NMDP | 25,938 | 0.07 |
| Lawrence M. Adedoyin | APS | 23,740 | 0.06 |
| Ebiti Ndok | UNPD | 21,203 | 0.06 |
| John Dara | NTP | 19,744 | 0.05 |
| Rasheed Shitta-Boy | MPPP | 16,492 | 0.04 |
| Yahaya Ndu | ARP | 12,264 | 0.03 |
| Ambrose Awuru | HDP | 12,023 | 0.03 |
| Patrick Utomi | SDMP | 11,544 | 0.03 |
| Chris Nwaokobia | LDPN | 8,472 | 0.02 |
| **TOTAL** |  | **38,209,978** | **100.00** |

**Source: INEC (2011)**

j) **The 2015 General Elections**

 General elections were held in Nigeria on 28th and 29th march 2015, the fifth quadrennial election to be held since the end of military rule in 1999. The elections were first scheduled to be held on 14th February 2015. However, the electoral commission postponed it by six weeks to 28 March mainly due to the poor distribution of permanent voter cards and also to curb ongoing Boko Haram insurgency in certain North-eastern states. Opposition candidate Muhammadu Buhari and his running mate Prof. Yemi Osibanjo won the presidential election by more than 2.5 million votes (Schneider, 2015).

Incumbent president Goodluck Jonathan conceded defeat on 31 March, before the results from all 36 states had been announced. The election marked the first time an incumbent president had lost re-election in Nigeria. The president elect was sworn in on 29 may 2015, marking the first time since Nigeria gained independence in 1960 that a sitting government peacefully transferred power to an elected member of the opposition. Buhari flipped many states that had voted PDP in the previous election. Other parties contested the election, APC won and PDP came second.

It is pertinent to state that Buhari of APC defeated Goodluck of PDP because of the merger or alliance Buhari had with Yorubas and some Igbo elements. Buhari contested and lost in 2003, 2007 and 2011. However, as a result of intergroup relations, political affiliations, alliance and interest, All Progressive Congress (APC) was formed in February 2013. The party is the result of a merger of Nigeria’s three biggest opposition parties - the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP), and a faction of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) headed by the then governor of Imo State- Owelle Rochas Okorocha. Muhammedu Buhari became APC presidential candidate and Prof. Yemi Osibanjo his running mate. The APC candidate won the presidential election by almost 2.6 million votes. In addition, the APC won the majority of seats in the Senate and the House of Representatives in the 2015 elections. Again, APC as a national Party provided a platform for political leaders of different ethnic nationalities to meet and chat a new course for the country and it impacted positively on intergroup relations in Nigeria. Political campaigns and rallies across the country by most political parties also provided a platform for the people of various ethnic nationalities to relate positively which in turn culminated to economic integration, political affiliations and socio-cultural ties.

**Performance at the Election**

**2015 General Election Results**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Candidate** | **Party** | **Vote** | **%** |
| Muhammadu Buhari  | APC | 15,424,921 | 53.96 |
| Goodluck Jonathan | PDP | 12,853,162 | 44.96 |
| Adebayo Ayeni  | APA | 53,537 | 0.19 |
| Gauinyu Galadima  | ACPN | 40,311 | 0.14 |
| Sam Eke  | CPP | 36,300 | 0.13 |
| Rufus Salau  | AD | 30,673 | 0.11 |
| Mani Ahmad  | ADC | 29,666 | 0.10 |
| Allagoa Chinedu  | PPN | 24,475 | 0.09 |
| Martin Onovo  | NCP | 24,475 | 0.09 |
| Tunde Anifowose Kelani | AA | 22,125 | 0.08 |
| Chekwas Okorie | UPP | 18,220 | 0.06 |
| Remi Soniaya | KP | 13,076 | 0.05 |
| Godson Okoye | UDP | 9,208 | 0.03 |
| Ambrose Albert Owuru | HP | 7,435 | 0.23 |
| **TOTAL** |  | **28,587,564** | **100.00** |

**Source: INEC (2015)**

**l) The 2019 General Elections**

 General elections were held in Nigeria on 23 February 2019 to elect the President, Vice president, House of Assembly, Representatives and the Senate. The elections had initially been scheduled for 16 February, but the Electoral Commission postponed the election by a week at 03:00 on the original polling day citing logistical challenges in getting electoral materials to polling stations on time.

 The elections were the most expensive ever held in Nigeria, costing N69 billion (US $ 625 million) more than the 2015 elections (Muruddeen, 2019). Incumbent president Muhammadu Buhari won his re-election bid, defeating his closest rival Atiku Abubakar by over 3 million votes. He was issued a certificate of Return and was sworn in on May 29 2019, the former date of Democracy Day in Nigeria (Premuium Times Nigeria, 6 June 2018. Retrieved 25 February 2019).

 Immediately following the elections there were claims of widespread fraud by the opposition. The claims included accusations of ballot box snatching, vote-trading and impersonation. There were also claims that caches of explosives were found by police. Losing candidate Atiku Abubakar filed a case in the Nigerian Supreme Court citing widespread irregularities in the polls. However, the court dismissed his case, saying that Atiku has failed to prove widespread fraud committed by the electoral team of Buhari. The court also dismissed an allegation which said that Buhari lied about his academic background (Ibrahim, 2019).

 The 2019 general elections in Nigeria impacted positively on intergroup relations. The opposition PDP held her presidential primary election in the city of Port Harcourt. PDP presidential aspirants, their supporters and leaders across the 36 states of Nigeria and FCT were in Port Harcourt for the 2019 presidential primary election. The presidential primary election, political campaigns and rallies across the country provided a platform for the various groups to relate positively which in turn culminated to economic integration, political affiliations and socio-cultural ties.

 Again, APC, PDP and other political parties had their rallies and campaigns across the country which promoted trade, economic integration, cultural-ties and intergroup relations. Even though, Nigerians lost their properties and loved ones during the 2019 general elections which ignited religious and ethnic hatred between and among groups. 2019 general elections impacted positively on intergroup relations in Nigeria.

**Performance at the election**

**2019 general election results**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Candidate** | **Party** | **Votes** | **%** |
| Muhammadu Buhari | APC | 15,191,847 | 55.60 |
| Atiku Abubakar | PDP | 11,262,978 | 41.22 |
| Felix Nicolas | PCP | 110,196 | 0.40 |
| Obadiah Mailafia | ADC | 97,874 | 0.36 |
| Gbor- John Terwase | APGA | 66,851 | 0.24 |
| Yabagi Sani | ADP | 54,930 | 0.20 |
| Akhimien D. Isibor | GDPN | 41,852 | 0.15 |
| Ibrahim Aliyu Hassan | APA | 36,866 | 0.13 |
| Donald Duke | SDP | 34,746 | 0.13 |
| Omoyele Sowore | AAC | 33,953 | 0.12 |
| Da-Silva Thomas Ayo | SNC | 28,680 | 0.10 |
| Shitu Mohammed Kabir | APDA | 26,558, | 0.10 |
| Yusuf Mamman | APM | 26,039 | 0.10 |
| Kingsley Moghalu | YPP | 21,886 | 0.8 |
| Anaeh Peter O | PPA | 21,822 | 0.8 |
| Isaac Babatunde | AP | 19,219 | 0.7 |
| Fela Durotoye | ANN | 16,779 | 0.6 |
| Bashayi Isa D | MMN | 14,540 | 0.5 |
| Osakwe Felix Johnson | DPP | 14,483 | 0.5 |
| Abdulrashid Hassan | AA  | 14,380 | 0.5 |
| Nwokeafor Ikechukwu | ACD  | 11,325 | 0.4 |
| Maina Maimuna K | NPC | 10,081 | 0.4 |
| Victor Okhai | PPC | 8,979 | 0.3 |
| Chike Ukaegbu | AAP | 8,902 | 0.3 |
| Oby Ezekwesili | ACPN | 7,223 | 0.3 |
| Ibrahim Usman | NRM | 6,229 | 0.2 |
| Ike Keke | NNPP | 6,111 | 0.2 |
| Moses Ayibiowu | NUP | 5,323 | 0.2 |
| Awosola Williams Olusola | DPC | 5,242 | 0.2 |
| Muhammed Usman Zaki | LP | 5,074 | 0.02 |
| Eke Samuel Chukwuma | GPN | 4,924 | 0.02 |
| Nwachukwu Chuks Nwabukwu  | AGA | 4,689 | 0.02 |
| Hamza Al-Mustapha | PPN | 4,622 | 0.02 |
| Ship Moses Godia | ABP | 4,523 | 0.02 |
| Chris Okotie | FDP  | 4,554 | 0.02 |
| Tope Fasua  | ANRP | 4,340 | 0.02 |
| Onwubuya  | FJP | 4,174 | 0.02 |
| Asukwo M. Achibong  | ND | 4,096 | 0.01 |
| Ahmed Buhari  | SNP | 3,941 | 0.01 |
| Salisu Yunusa Tankop  | NCP | 3,799 | 0.01 |
| Shittu M. Asiwaju | ANP | 3,586 | 0.01 |
| Obinna U. Ikeagwuonu  | APP | 3,585 | 0.01 |
| Balogun Isiaka Ishola  | UDP | 3,170 | 0.01 |
| Obaje Yusuf Ameh | ANDP | 3,104 | 0.01 |
| Chief Umenwa Godwin | AGAP | 3,071 | 0.01 |
| Isreal N. Davidson  | RAP | 2,972 | 0.01 |
| Ukonga Frank  | DA | 2,769 | 0.01 |
| Santuraki Hamisu  | MPN | 2,752 | 0.01 |
| Fuunmilayo Davies  | MAJA | 2,651 | 0.01 |
| Gbenga Hashim | PT | 2,613 | 0.01 |
| Ali Soyode  | YES | 2,394 | 0.01 |
| Nsehe Nsebong  | RPN | 2,388 | 0.01 |
| Ojinika Geff Chizee | CC | 2,391 | 0.01 |
| Rabi Yasai Hassan  | NAC | 2,279 | 0.01 |
| Enuice Atuejide  | NIP | 2,248 | 0.01 |
| Dara John | ASD | 2,146 | 0.01 |
| Fagbearo – Byron  | KP | 1,911 | 0.01 |
| Emmanuel Etim | CNP | 1,874 | 0.01 |
| Chukwu Egwuzolugo S. C | JMPP | 1,853 | 0.01 |
| Madu N. Edozie  | ID | 1,845 | 0.01 |
| Osuala C. John  | RNP | 1,792 | 0.01 |
| Albert Owuru .A | HDP | 1,663 | 0.01 |
| David Esosa Ize-Iyamu  | BNPP | 1,649 | 0.01 |
| Inwa Ahmed Sakil | UPN | 1,631 | 0.01 |
| Akpua Robinson  | NDLP | 1,588 | 0.01 |
| Mark E. Audu | UP | 1,561 | 0.01 |
| Ishaka Paul Ofemile  | NEPP | 1,524 | 0.01 |
| Kriz David  | LM | 1,438 | 0.01 |
| Ademola B. Abidemi  | NCMP | 1,378 | 0.01 |
| Edosomulan Johnson  | NDLP | 1,192 | 0.00 |
| Angela Johnson  | AUN | 1,092 | 0.00 |
| Abah Lewis Elaigwu  | CAP | 1,111 | 0.00 |
| Nwangwu U. Peter | WPN  | 732 | 0.00 |
| **TOTAL** |  | **27,324,583** | **100.00** |

**Source: INEC 2019.**

**Effects of Party Politics on Intergroup Relations in Nigeria.**

 The intergroup relationship between the different ethnic groups in Nigeria changes in line with the transformation in the administrative structures of the country at every material time. To Michael (2019) every new development in an already existing institution will either add or subtract from the original state of such institution. The introduction of party politics into Nigeria political space has had significant effects on the existing pattern of relationship among the various groups in Nigeria. They include; National integration, majority /minority dichotomy, upper and lower class dichotomy, unequal development, regional crisis, ethnic politics and states creation.

1. **National Integration**

 For every nation or any community of persons that desires growth and development, unity is of essence. At the early stage of political party in Nigeria it wore a national outlook that incorporated people from different regions of the country; hence the people interacted at the party level. The issue of ethnicity was not so pronounced because the various ethnic groups were grappling with the colonial government for recognition in governance and to regain their independence. To support this fact is Alapiki (2004) who suggested that “in 1941 Nigerian Youth Movement internal election; the main contestants were Ernest Ikoli (Ijo) and Samuel Akuinsanya (Ijebu). Dr. Azikiwe supported Akintoye while bulk of NYM leadership supported Ikoli who emerged winner over a Yoruba son.

As the struggle for political recognition intensified and the quest for independence spread to nooks and crannies of the country, the colonial government divided Nigeria into three unequal regions (Northern, Western and Eastern) marking the genesis of party politics along regional and ethnic lines. Corroborating the above

Michael (2019); posits that; party politics based on ethnic affiliations further polarized the colonial Nigerian state and those from the minority group started agitating for recognition. Instead of promoting national integrations and harmonious intergroup relations, party politics further divided the various Nigerian people along ethnic lines.

**(b) Majority/Minority Dichotomy**

 Politics is a game of number, and the most populated group is mostly advantageous to always produce leadership in a region where we have minority groups, their chances of winning election not minding the quality of their candidates and party ideology is always slim. Hence, power has always concentrated with the majority leaving the minority group to agitate for political recognition. Alapiki (2004) argues that in partisan politics, there is enough evidence to support the argument that electoral behaviour in Nigeria was not guided by ideology, party program and quality of candidate, but by a political calculus of the majority group to take over government. This has over the years created a majority/minority dichotomy which has negatively impacted on intergroup relations in Nigeria.

**(c) Upper and Lower class Dichotomy**

 Before the introduction of party politics in Nigeria, the power of the state was in the hands of individuals and members of the public were allowed to fulfil their destinies through merit and hard work but the system changed with the introduction of partisan politics. Ademoyega (1981) justified this claim thus; “the government will protect the interest of few people while denying the great majority of Nigerians their rights and privileges. The government helped few Nigerians to make millions of naira through oil distributorship, business advantages and awards of contracts and looting of public fund”.

The lower class feels their wealth has been hijacked by the few upper classes and as such demonstrates their grievances through armed robbery, protest, economic sabotage, kidnapping and assassinations amongst others. There is therefore a wide gap between the rich and the poor in Nigeria which has impacted negatively on intergroup relations.

**(d) Unequal Development**

 Prior to party politics in Nigeria, kingdoms, empires and city states were allowed to develop according to their abilities since they enjoy sovereignty. However, with the introduction of party politics by the colonial government, the tune is different.

Ekpeyong (2005) asserts that “a major feature of Nigeria politics is that appointments into political positions does not consider merit or capacity but is tied to ethnic origin and party affiliations”. This implies that the control of government and political appointments are usually concentrated within the ethnic group the principal leader comes from leaving the other groups to their fate. These also impacted negatively on intergroup relations.

**(e) Regional/ Ethnic Crisis**

 The 1965 election into the Western House of Assembly was another democratic comedy (Michael, 2019). A.G candidate who held certificates of returns later heard their names mentioned in the government media as failures. The announcement led to total breakdown of law and order in the Western region.

The hoodlums took advantage of the situation and molested, looted and abused innocent citizens. This was the right time to declare state of emergency pending the conduct of free and fair election. However, Balewa led government was more interested in preserving law and order. Balewa announced that there was normalcy in the West; meanwhile, over 300 persons have been killed with houses burnt. This created tension in the country and further impacted negatively on the fragile nature of intergroup relations in Nigeria.

 It is no longer clandestine that the people of present day Nigeria related in a more peaceful manner when they had their autonomy and control their resources. The cat and mouse federalism that is presently practiced in Nigeria cannot promote harmonious relationship between the various groups as the minority groups such as the Niger Delta region and the people of the middle belt who believe they have bulk of the natural resources that sustains Nigeria grapples with poverty. Party politics has encouraged the domination of smaller groups by bigger ones.

**CONCLUSION**

Evidence at our disposal so far shows that party politics has come to stay in Nigeria. The practice so far has indicated a historical trend over the years we can build upon. They generally started with a multi party system that was quickly followed by the desire for a two-party system arrangement. Every effort should be made to improve on the politics in Nigeria. The new generation political class in Nigeria must shun the ugly practices so far experienced. Nigerian human capital should no longer be waste through unwarranted rivalry, inordinate ambition and assassination of veteran political stars.

 Party politics in Nigeria should meet international standards. International standards should be respected. The minority both in ethnicity and religion should be allowed to co-exist with the majority. Political oppression and suppression should be discouraged. Party ideologies should be sharpened and adhered to by the political class in Nigeria. However, for the quality of Nigerian politics to improve, some identified areas must be tackled. These are constitutional respect, exhibition of the sportsmanship, manifestation or moral conscience and the need to consider the international dimension. If attention is paid to these five areas by the Nigerian statesmen, Nigeria will make progress politically, which will impact positively on intergroup relations.

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