

## POLITICAL PARTY, PARTICIPATION AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** *The study examined the political party participation and democratic governance in Nigeria using the Osun state 2018 gubernatorial election as a case study. It also delves into how political parties mobilized people to participate in democracy, examine their roles in the 2018 Osun state gubernatorial election, and assess the challenges facing political parties in engendering participation and democratic governance. The study utilized primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were collected using questionnaire and oral interviews. Purposive random sampling method was employed in the selection of a total of twenty (20) party members each from the six political parties that participated in the election making a total of 120 respondents, and 20 each from identified groups of people (Market women, farmers, business operators, INEC staff, community development associations and government workers) making 120 respondents. In all, a total of two hundred and forty (240) questionnaires were administered in the three senatorial districts of the state. The results revealed that the political parties are the key actors in democratic governance. Following the investigation, it became apparent that political parties have several roles to play in engendering participation in politics as well as democratic governance. Though there have some militating factors hampering the achievement of these lofty functions among which are poor funding, government interference, poor political education, thuggery and hooliganism, violence and threat to lives. The study concluded that without viable political parties, participation in politics will continue to drop, and democratic governance will not be assured.*

### Preamble

Democratic governance is a deal between the ruler and the ruled i.e the government and the governed. It emphasizes the rule-ruler-ruled relationship within the ambit of the government and the governed. This deal is made up of two parts – the government's legitimacy, that is, adherence to rules as well as doing the will of the citizens. The second part is the arrangement that regulates this deal of legitimacy in the competitive political election. The essence of the arrangement is to ensure participation in governance and policy making. This participation is the fundamental meaning of democracy. Participation in democracy involves much more than just voting. Political participation derives from the freedom to speak out, assemble and associate; the ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs; and the opportunity to register as a candidate, to campaign, to be elected and to hold office at all levels of government. Political parties are among the most important institutions affecting political participation. In most countries, political parties determine candidates' nomination, election and which issues achieve national prominence.

Democracy and political participation are interwoven concepts such that none can exist in the absence of the other. The process of establishing a democratic system requires

the full participation of the people. This participation may be direct or indirect and must be by the citizens. Participation refers to the different ways in which the public express opinions and ideally exert influence on political, economic, management and other social decisions. For a well-informed participation to occur is necessary. It was argued that people most affected by a decision should have the most say while those less affected should have less say. Participation has its objectives from the administrative perspective, to motivate the people and public support building activities. For the citizens, it facilitates useful information exchange concerning local issues that are of concerned. It enables individuals and groups to influence agency decision in a representative manner etc.

Political participation is that activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action. It is that aspect of democracy that deals with the political environment. Davies (1963) cited in Unanka (2004), defined political participation as “taking part in making the basic decision as to what are the common goals of one’s society and as to the best ways to move towards these goals”. Political participation expresses actions, reactions, interactions and role expectations as one finds oneself as an integral member of a society. It is a known fact that without substantial citizens’ involvement, the democratic process falls short of its goals. According to Ogunna (2003), political participation can be active, partial or passive but whichever way, it will impinge on democracy.

The above explication sounds logical, but the interpretation of what happens in the type of democracy being practiced in Nigeria as seen in the 2018 gubernatorial election in Osun State, showed that ours is a democracy without democratic principles as displayed by the political parties. What we practice in Nigeria as evident in the 2018 gubernatorial election in Osun State is a democracy where voting is the hallmark of democratic participation. The replacement of direct participation before, during and after elections with only voting in the periodic elections is the fundamental expression of the abuse of democracy. Democracy is grossly abused when the citizens are not mobilized to be part of the governance through participation in the democratic activities.

The problems addressed by this study are those associated with the activities of political parties which were considered counterproductive and inimical to democratic governance in the Fourth Republic using the 2018 gubernatorial election of Osun State. These problems are the various irregularities that were evident in the intra and inter party activities bothering on the selection of flag-bearers, canvassing for votes, acceptability and actual participation in the election. Despite the claim that we operate democracy where political parties were expected to play consolidating roles, their stance contravenes this expectation, especially during the 2018 gubernatorial election. Election in Nigeria quoting former president Olusegun Obasanjo is a "do or die affair" and this is the reflection of the democracy being practiced in Nigeria.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

This section offered conceptual insight tailored towards understanding concepts that are germane to this study such as political party, democracy, election, democratic consolidation and governance. This will make for a better understanding of the content of this paper.

## **Political Party**

A political party is an organized group of people with similar political aims and opinions that seek to influence the public policy by getting its candidate elected to public office (Likoti, 2005). As cited in Ojo (2008), Edmund Burke defined political party as a body of men united for promoting their joint endeavours towards national interests based on some particular principles in which they all agreed. The existence of political parties according to this definition is based on the principles of promoting national interest with membership spread across the country. This lends credence to the position of the Nigerian constitution which required that political parties should reflect federal character before they can be registered (Tordoff, 1999). In a similar vein, Osumah (2009) conceives political party as a voluntary association organized by persons, bind by common interests or aim, which seeks to acquire or retain power through the election of its candidates into public office. This connotes political party as a voluntary organisation, aimed at acquiring political power in order to implement government policies. Political parties are integral part of the process for the entrenchment of democracy. Thus, political parties produce the candidates, set the parameters of issues and agenda within which elections are held and they are expected to perform these duties periodically.

To Nnoli (2003), political party is a group of people who share a common conception of how state power should be organized and used. Political parties could also been regarded as an instrument for contesting elections for the purpose of selecting candidates and parties to exercise political power (Yaqub, 2002). A political party is simply a body of organized individuals whose ultimate aim and goal is to contest for governmental power through the instrumentalities of elections. While it should not be misconstrued that the mere existence of political parties presupposes that a society is democratic, however, competitive and periodic elections have come to at least define the character of liberal democracy (Momoh, 2013).

Egbewole and Muhtar, (2010) summarized the functions of a political party as:

- Stimulating the citizenry to take a greater interest in election and activities of government, defining political issues of the day and sharpen the choice between alternative paths, presenting candidates who are committed to announce position with respect to issues, majority party provides basis upon which government can be operated, and accepting responsibility to govern upon winning election.
- A political party is much more than an organization for seeking and controlling political power. More critically, it is an organization for expressing and harmonizing interests, and that intermediates between the citizens and political society, government and state (Ikelegbe, 2013). There are numerous types of political parties such as elite-based parties, mass-based parties, ethnic-based parties, electoralist parties and movement parties (Gunther and Diamond, 2003).

When we consider popular attitudes on political parties around the world, many of them reflect strongly negative views held by the general public. Popular views on parties range from identifying parties as: power-hungry; corrupt; either excessively partisan or, on the other extreme, lacking in ideology; male-dominated; elite-dominated; lacking internal democracy; lacking meaningful connection to the grassroots; responsible for gridlock and obstructing the smooth functioning of government; and in some cases violent and dangerous (Carothers, 2006 cited in Deme, 2013).

## **Democracy**

The word democracy originated from the Greek word *dēmokratía*, meaning "rule by people" is a system of government where the citizens exercise power by balloting. The Greek word *dēmokratía*, is actually two words 'demos' and 'kratia' where 'demos' means people and 'kratia' means power (Wikipedia, 2019). In a direct democracy, the citizens as a whole form a governing body and vote directly on each issue. In the modern democracy, the citizens elect representatives from among themselves. These representatives meet to form a governing body, such as legislature. In the modern democracy the powers of the majority are exercised within the framework of a representative democracy, but the constitution limit the majority and protect the minority, usually through the enjoyment by all of certain individual rights, e.g. freedom of speech, and freedom of association

"Rule of the majority" is commonly referred to as democracy. John Locke (1780) noted that there is no practical alternative to majority political rule i.e., to taking the consent of the majority as the act of the whole and binding every individual. It would be next to impossible to obtain the consent of every individual before acting collectively. No rational people could desire and constitute a society that had to dissolve straightaway because the majority was unable to make the final decision and the society was incapable of acting as one body.

Democracy is a system of processing conflicts in which outcomes depend on what participants do, but no single force controls what occurs and its outcomes. The uncertainty of outcomes is inherent in democracy. Democracy makes all forces struggle repeatedly to realize their interests and devolves power from groups of people to sets of rules. Western democracy, as distinct from that which existed in pre-modern societies, are generally considered to have originated in city-states such as in ancient Athens and the ancient Rome, where various schemes and degrees of enfranchisement of the free male population were observed before the form disappeared in the West at the beginning of late antiquity (Diamond and Morlino, 2016).

Larry Diamond, an American Political Scientist, identifies four key elements of democracy:

- a political system for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections;
- the active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life;
- protection of the human rights of all citizens;
- a rule of law, in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens (Landman, 2018)

In summary, democracy refers to the rule of the people which is done through representation of few. It is a form of government in which the people have the freedom to choose who their leaders will be through direct or indirect, free and fair election.

## **The Concept of Election**

An election is a formal group decision-making process by which a population chooses an individual to hold public office. Elections have been the usual mechanism by which modern representative democracy has operated since the 17th century. Elections are used to fill offices in the arms of government at national and sub-national levels. To elect

means "to choose or make a decision", and sometimes other forms of ballot such as referendum are referred to as elections, especially in the United States.

Suffrage or the question of who may vote is a central issue in elections. The electorate does not generally comprise of the entire population; for example, many countries prohibit those who are under a particular age from voting, all jurisdictions require a minimum age for voting. Suffrage is typically only for citizens of the country, though further limits may be imposed. However, in the European Union, one can vote in municipal elections if one lives in the municipality and is an EU citizen; the nationality of the country of residence is not required.

In some countries, voting is required by law; if an eligible voter does not cast a vote, he or she may be subject to punitive measures such as a fine (Wikipedia, 2019). In Western Australia, the penalty for a first time offender failing to vote is a \$20.00 fine, which increases to \$50.00 if failed to vote in subsequent election. The process and penalties differ from one country to another (Wikipedia, 2019).

## **Governance**

The concept of governance is both dynamic and resilient in nature. It defies a concise or categorical definition. Therefore, it is better explained for proper understanding. Though some definitions have been offered and this will serve as plinth for proper positioning of the concept. The World Bank defines governance as "the use of power in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development" (World Bank, 1992). This definition connotes merging state's institutional and structural arrangements, decision-making processes and implementing capacity and relationship between the government and the governed, for the purpose of socio-economic development.

Douglass (2011) perceives governance as: "means of making and managing public policy, controlling subordinates to exercise skill and commitment to achieve excellence in a given set of assignments and assurance that the constituents follow established process while instruments of governance provide means of maintaining accountability"

Maccarney, Mohammed and Rodriguez (1995), conceive governance as the relationship and interface between the societal actors. They saw governance as 'the relationship between civil society and the state, between the government rulers and the ruled, the government and the governed'. The UNDP (1997) defines it as "the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs". A rather comprehensive definition of governance was offered by Kufman and Mastruzzi (2006) the duo defined it as:

"the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised which include the process by which government are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state of the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them".

Also in an attempt to further conceptualize governance, Kaufuman, Kraay and Masturazzi (2005) put forward six indicators of governance. These are:

- Accountability

- Political effectiveness of public service provisions
- Quality of bureaucracy
- Quality or soundness of policies pursued by government
- Rule of law, and
- Control of corruption

It can be concluded from the foregoing that governance is the process of transparency and accountability that involves the state on one hand and non-state actors on the other in the economic, social and political administration of a nation.

### **Political parties in Nigeria: the historical perspective**

The formation of political parties in Nigeria can be traced to the early 1920s when the first set of political parties was formed. Prominent among them was the Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP) under the leadership of Sir Herbert Macaulay, sequel to the provision in the Clifford Constitution for four elected members into then forty-six member Legislative Council. The formation of the NNDP was followed in 1934 by Lagos Youth Movement (LYM), which later renamed Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM).

The early 1950s saw the emergence of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) led by Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe, the Action Group (AG) by Chief Obafemi Awolowo and the Northern People's Congress (NPC) with Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello as its leader. The Northern People's Congress (NPC) and the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) in 1959 later changed to National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) eventually coalesced and formed a government in 1960 when Nigeria first got her political independence. Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe was made the ceremonial President, while Sir Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa emerged the Prime Minister symbolizing close political affinity between the Hausa and Igbo political hegemony which came to an end with the outbreak of the civil war in 1967. There were also some political parties such as Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU) that was radical in posture, and an arch-rival of Northern people's Congress (NPC) (Nnoli, 1985).

On 15th January, 1966, civil rule was terminated through a military coup and the Junta remained in power for over thirty years with only factional and counter-coups interruptions. In the Second Republic, five political parties emerged. These are; National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), the Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP), the Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP) and the Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP). These parties re-incarnated from those of the First Republic without a clear difference in the prevailing political ideology. Unfortunately, on 31st December, 1983 General Muhammadu Buhari on the allegation of corruption and indiscipline terminated the Second Republic (Emmanuel, 1994).

The preparations and process of 1993 general elections midwived by the Military Government of General Ibrahim Babangida was one of the longest political transition programmes in Nigeria. The political parties that emerged and contested in the elections are the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) of which the formation was orchestrated by the military, though several political groups were formed by people but they but were neither recognised nor registered by the military government including Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM), National Center Party of Nigeria (NCPN), United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP), Democratic Party of Nigeria

(DPN) among others. The annulment of the presidential election result of 12th June, 1993, election adjudged to be the most transparent and fair marked the turning-point in Nigeria's political history (Abutudu, 1997). The annulment imbroglio consumed the regime of Babangida. The Interim National Government hurriedly put in place was sacked by General Abacha in a palace coup.

The death of General Sani Abacha on June 8, 1998, ushered in the transition to the Fourth Republic under General Abdulsalam Abubakar with new political parties. These parties are the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the Alliance for Democracy (AD) and the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP). The early stage of re-democratization process saw the stifling of political parties' space, with difficult position imposed by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). It took the intervention of the Supreme Court in 2002 for INEC to liberalize the political party arena and allow political competition to flourish. Presently, there are more than thirty registered political parties in the country including PDP, APC, LP, APGA, among others (Omuruyi, 2006). The number has swelled up and as at 2019, not less than 42 political parties have been registered.

### **Democratic consolidation, governance and political parties**

Democratic consolidation implies the extent to which the norms of democracy are institutionalized in the fabrics, structures and processes of government. Concisely put, democratic consolidation entail institutionalization of rules and regulations that fully guaranteed political participation and the competition that it stands for. Democratic consolidation scholars have used different definitions of democratic consolidation. These definitions are based on the outcomes of politics, such as institutionalization of political institutions, social justice, and economic equality (Lee, 2007). Schmitter defines the minimalist conception of a consolidated democratic regime as the accidental arrangements, prudential norms, and contingent solutions that have emerged during the transition into relations of cooperation and competition that are reliably known, regularly practiced, and voluntarily accepted by those persons or collectives that participate in democratic governance (Schmitter, 1992). In his own contribution Linz (1978), asserts that: a consolidated democracy is one in which consider(s) that there is any alternative to the democratic process to gain power and that no political institutions or groups has a claim to veto the action of democratically elected decision makers. Democratic consolidation is about regime maintenance and about regarding the key political institutions as the only legitimate framework for political contestation and adherence to the democratic rules of the game (Ogundiya, 2009).

More explicitly, Gunther, Diamandurous, and Puhle (1995) contend that the democratization process has three phases: the fall of the authoritarian regime, consolidation, and enduring democracy. Democratic consolidation should therefore connote a consistent and sustained practice of democratic principle (Yagboyaju, 2013). The building of a consolidated democracy involves in part an affirmation and strengthening of certain institutions, such as the electoral system, revitalized or newly created parties, judicial independence and respect for human rights, which have been created or recreated during the course of the transition (Valenzuela, 1990).

Diamond (1995) was poignant in his analysis. He contends that: democratic consolidation means the quality, depth, and authenticity of democracy in its various

dimensions has been participation and representation broader, more autonomous, and inclusive; civil liberties more comprehensively and rigorously protected; accountability more systematic and several of the newly emerging democratic regimes are far from consolidated. They are merely surviving without consolidating. In particular, in the less developed regions of the world, these fragile democratic regimes have experienced significant uncertainty over the rules of the game, due to their terrible economic conditions and other social problems. Although many Third-World countries (which Nigeria belongs) have experienced transitions to procedural democracy, such as free elections with few barriers to mass participation and meaningful party competition, this democratic change definitely does not guarantee democratic stability (Lee, 2007). Democracy is said to be consolidated when it can avoid democratic breakdown. Democratic consolidation is obstructed by or destroyed causally by the effects of institutional shallowness and decay. If democracy is to become consolidated, therefore, electoral democracies must become deeper and more liberal. This will require greater executive (and military) accountability to both the law and the scrutiny of other branches of government, as well as the public, the reduction of barriers to political participation and mobilization by marginalized groups; and more effective protection for the political and civil right of all citizens

With consolidation, democracy becomes regularized and deeply internalized in social institutional and even psychological life as well as in political calculations for achieving goals (Babatope, 2012).

### **Political parties and voters mobilization in the 2018 Osun state gubernatorial election**

This section addresses the methods adopted by the political parties in the mobilization of people to vote and participate in democratic governance. It is important to state here that a table was generated for the respondents and they were encouraged to pick from the assertions as presented therein.

**Table 1. Methods of mobilization by political parties**

Assertions	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
The use of manifestoes	Strongly Agree	5	2.4
	Agree	10	4.9
	Uncertain	-	-
	Disagree	70	33.9
	Strongly Disagree	121	58.7
	Total	206	100.0
Promise of political appointments	Strongly Agree	80	38.8
	Agree	105	50.9
	Uncertain	10	4.9
	Disagree	11	5.0
	Strongly Disagree	-	-
	Total	206	100.0
Financial/other physical inducements	Strongly Agree	120	58.2
	Agree	86	41.7
	Uncertain		
	Disagree		
	Strongly Disagree		
	Total	206	100.0



Coercion/Threats	Strongly Agree	86	41.7
	Agree	110	53.3
	Uncertain	10	4.8
	Disagree		
	Strongly Disagree		
	Total	206	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, June 2019

Table 1 showed the methods employed in the mobilization of voters in the 2018 gubernatorial election in the Osun State. From the table 191 respondents amounting to 92.6% disagreed that with the use of manifestoes as a potent method that the political parties employed in the mobilization of people for the election. Only 15 respondents amounting 7.3% agreed with the position. It can therefore be said that the use of party manifestoes was no longer popular in the mobilization of citizens for election. This may not be unconnected with poor manifestoes of political parties and the exposure of the electorates.

In the same vein, the use of political appointments as a yardstick for the mobilization was scored high by the respondents, 80 and 105 respondents (195 respondents) agreed and strongly agreed representing 89.7% with the position. It is of a fact in the gubernatorial election of 2018 in the state that political parties identified some stalwarts and promised them political positions ranging from local government chairmen, advisers, special advisers, board members and other positions to deliver their wards and in some cases their local government areas. This indeed made the election a do or die affair to some of the people. Financial/other physical inducement as a method was considered the main thing in the 2018 gubernatorial election mobilization in the state. A total of 120 respondents strongly agreed while 86 respondents representing 58.2% and 41.7% respectively agreed with this position. It has been alleged severally that the use of money and other inducements has come to stay in the political mobilization of electorates, ditto democratic governance in Nigeria. This was freely display in the Osun state where several millions of naira was alleged to have been distributed by flag bearers of political parties in the said election. There was a demonstration by the Osogbo community against the APC party leader Asiwaju Bola Tinubu accusing him of complicity in the election. The use of coercion/threats was also considered potent method of political mobilization in the state in 2018. A total of 196 respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the assertion that political parties use coercion and threats to mobilize and or discouraged other members who may likely not vote for them. This often led to physical attacks on party faithfuls and community leaders who may have refused to pledge support for a particular party.

### **The role of political parties in the 2018 Osun State gubernatorial election**

This section examined the roles of the political parties in the 2018 gubernatorial elections of Osun state. The function of political party is basically to serve as a platform for actualizing democratic governance. The political parties are expected to perform the following functions:

- i. Unite, simplify and stabilize the political process: Political parties bring together divergent sectional interests particularly in countries with multi-ethnic groups and regional

interests, narrow the geographical gap and in most cases provide coherence to government that is federal in nature.

ii. Recruitment of political leaders. People in authority who are occupying various political offices were recruited by political parties – including the president, governors, parliamentarians, council chairmen and a number of other political appointees.

iii. Struggle for capturing power. They strive to win elections and form governments by means of forming order out of chaos.

iv. Linkage between government and citizens. Parties seek to educate and sensitize electorates through mobilization of party stalwarts in rallies, campaigns and other forms of identifying individuals with a particular political party.

v. Presentation of issues. Political parties set value goals for the society by ways of manifesto and philosophical bases.

vi. Interest aggregations. The parties do bring together issues raised during campaigns; select those that are of urgent and paramount national interest and focus attention them.

vii. Political mobilization and social welfare. In developing nations of the world where political habits and traditions are yet to grow, parties does or do the job of political modernization and at the same time work for the alleviation of the sufferings of the people during periods of disaster, etc.

**Table 2. Functions of political parties in the 2018 elections**

Assertions	Responses	Frequency	Percent
Unite, simplify and stabilize the political process in Osun state.	Strongly Agree	10	4.8
	Agree	21	10.1
	Uncertain	15	7.2
	Disagree	75	36.4
	Strongly Disagree	85	41.2
	Total	206	100.0
Recruitment of political leaders and government functionaries.	Strongly Agree	90	43.6
	Agree	66	32.0
	Uncertain	11	5.3
	Disagree	12	5.7
	Strongly Disagree	27	13.1
	Total	206	100.0
Struggle for capturing power.	Strongly Agree	150	72.8
	Agree	56	27.1
	Uncertain		
	Disagree		
	Strongly Disagree		
	Total	206	100.0
Linkage between government and citizens.	Strongly Agree	80	38.8
	Agree	81	39.1
	Uncertain	5	2.4
	Disagree	29	14
	Strongly Disagree	11	5.3
	Total	206	100.0

Interest aggregations.	Strongly Agree	25	12.1
	Agree	35	16.9
	Uncertain	10	4.8
	Disagree	70	33.9
	Strongly Disagree	66	32
	Total	206	100.0
Political mobilization and social welfare.	Strongly Agree	71	40.3
	Agree	61	29.6
	Uncertain	13	6.3
	Disagree	43	20.8
	Strongly Disagree	18	8.7
	Total	206	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, June 2019

From Table 2, it became evident how people perceived the manner with which the political parties performed their functions. On uniting, simplifying and stabilizing the political process in Osun state as manifested during the gubernatorial election of 2018 a preponderant of the respondents disagreed that the function is being performed by the political parties, 160 respondents amounting to 77.2% were in this category. The respondents added that the political parties are more of destabilizers than fostering unity in the state in the wake of the election. On recruitment of political leaders and government functionaries in the state, the table shows that the function is being performed fairly well. A total of 156 respondents representing 75.6% agreed and strongly agreed that they recruit political leaders and other government functionaries. The table further showed that, struggle to capture power was the major preoccupation of the political parties. 150 respondents representing 72.8% strongly agreed while 50 respondents representing 27.1% agreed with assertion. In fact there is no dissent opinion to this position.

Political parties serving as linkage between government and citizens was considered one of the best performed of all the functions. It was argued that political parties serve as linkage between political stalwarts, government and the citizenry. 161 respondents amounting to 78% agreed that they have been doing well in this area. Some respondents argued that they are more of linkage between their families and government alone. On interest aggregations the political parties were scored low. They were termed as bunch of reactionaries and people who does not have real initiatives. A total of 136 respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed amounting to 65.9%. On political mobilization and social welfare function the political parties were believed to be performing this with all vigour as the bulk of their resources are being devoted to this. Seventy-one (71) respondents representing 40.3% strongly agreed and 61 respondents amounting to 29.6% agreed totaling 70% concur with the assertion that the political parties are agent of mobilization and social welfare.

### **The challenges facing political parties in engendering political participation and democratic governance**

This section dips into the assessment of the challenges facing political parties' in engendering participation in democratic governance. Table 3 reveals some of the notable

challenges facing political parties as evident in the Osun State gubernatorial election of 2018.

**Table 3. Assessment of challenges facing political parties in engendering participation and democratic governance**

Assertions	Responses	Frequency	Percent
Poor funding	Strongly Agree	80	38.8
	Agree	120	58.2
	Uncertain	1	0.48
	Disagree	5	5.3
	Strongly Disagree	-	
	Total	206	100.0
Government Interference	Strongly Agree	80	38.8
	Agree	96	46.6
	Uncertain	10	6.6
	Disagree	20	13.2
	Strongly Disagree		
	Total	206	100.0
Lack of political education	Strongly Agree	150	72.8
	Agree	56	27.1
	Uncertain		
	Disagree		
	Strongly Disagree		
	Total	206	100.0
Thuggery and hooliganism	Strongly Agree	80	38.8
	Agree	81	39.1
	Uncertain	5	2.4
	Disagree	29	14
	Strongly Disagree	11	5.3
	Total	206	100.0
Violence and threat to life	Strongly Agree	75	36.4
	Agree	101	49.0
	Uncertain	10	4.8
	Disagree	10	4.8
	Strongly Disagree	10	4.8
	Total	206	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, June 2019

As seen from the Table 3 there are several challenges militating against political parties from stimulating political participation and democratic governance. The challenges were put on display for respondents to rank them accordingly. 'Poor funding' as a challenge was unanimously agreed to by respondents as major. A total of 80 respondents amounting to 38.8% strongly agreed that it was a major challenge, while 120 respondents amounting to 58.2% agreed to the assertion. Poor funding, this manifests in not having a viable source of financial support for political parties for the execution of their mandates continued to be a major factor. It was discovered that none of the leading political parties have a permanent

secretariat for their parties. Another challenge highlighted is the ‘government intervention’ either through policy, or muscling of party stalwarts by governmental security outfits. This made party members to always live in perpetual fear. A total of 176 respondents amounting to 85.4% agreed and strongly agreed that government meddling in the affairs of political parties poses a serious challenge.

Lack of political education was also listed as a challenge. 150 respondents amounting to 72.8% strongly agreed, while 56 respondents amounting to 27.1% agreed with the assertion. Political education is very important, but this was lacking in the political terrain of Nigeria as revealed in the 2018 Osun state gubernatorial election. Illiteracy and un-care attitude of political front liners does not encourage political education. Thuggery and hooliganism is another challenge considered potent. A total of 80 respondents (38.8%) strongly agreed, 81 respondents (39.1%) agreed, while 29 respondents (14%) disagreed, 11 respondents (5.3%) strongly disagreed with this assertion. It is evident here that thuggery and hooliganism have gone a long way in preventing the political parties from achieving their aim. More often political rallies are hijacked by touts and miscreants thereby turning peaceful political rallies into chaos. This leads to the other identified challenge of ‘violence and threat to life’. A total of 75 respondents representing 36.4% and 101 respondents representing 49.0% subscribed to the assertion of violence and threat to life as a challenge.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The study concluded that “political party participation and democratic governance in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic” is an important aspect of the democratic attempt and its continuity. It further emphasizes the roles of political parties as fundamental to democratic governance. Following the findings of the study, it became apparent that political parties have several roles to play in engendering participation, as well as, democratic governance. As found in the Osun State gubernatorial election of 2018, there have been some militating factors hampering the achievement of these lofty functions among which are poor funding, government interference, poor political education, thuggery and hooliganism, violence and threat to lives. However, the study revealed that the electorate participation in the gubernatorial election is far from encouraging as not up to 50% of the registered electorates actually exercise their franchise. In the same vein, the body responsible for the conduct election in Nigeria the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) still has a long way to go in the conduct of free, fair and credible elections in the future. The umpire must carry out their function without fear or favour and it should not be independent only in name but also in operations. The finding of the study has made us to understand how political parties in democracy can engender participation and democratic governance. It is suffice to say that without viable political parties, participation in democratic governance will continue to drop, and its assurance will become a mirage. Even though formation of political parties is considered harbinger of viable democratic government, but from the findings of this study, we can assert that democratic governance goes beyond formation of political parties alone. The active role playing by political parties, citizens’ active involvement is a must.

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