

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE ENSHRINEMENT OF DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA AND GHANA: A LEGAL COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS\*

### Abstract

*Political parties are the centre of electioneering, their outcome and impact on the society. Most democracies in the world were strengthened or weakened by the level of the contributions of political parties in the enthronement and enshrinement of good governance and democracy in the nations. Free and fair elections, which are key elements of democracy, cannot be possible without the cooperation and positive contributions of political parties with the electoral body. Political parties with strong progressive ideologies impact the society positively, leading to increases in the welfare of the people, stability and good governance and above all, proper enshrinement of democracy. It is the findings of this study that Nigeria and Ghana share a lot in common when politics, government, legal system and democracies are concerned particularly because they share the same colonial masters and attaining political independence within the same period or decade. It is also found that, Ghana is better in terms of her political party system and the progress so far recorded in her political development and contribution of her political parties to the enshrinement of democracy in the country compared to Nigeria. Ghana has enjoyed longer period of uninterrupted civil or democratically elected government than Nigeria that experienced various Military regimes and interruption in her quest for democratic rule since independence with Military rule taking a larger or longer period of her existence. Also, Ghana seems to be more serious in building political parties with realizable ideologies than Nigeria. It is among others recommended that more effective legal and institutional frameworks of both countries political parties be put in place and government pay better or improved attention and commitment to strengthening the party system with defined and achievable but people-oriented ideologies that will progressively put democracy and good governance permanently in place in both nations.*

**Keywords:** Democracy, Political Parties, Nigeria, Ghana, Comparative Analysis

### 1. Introduction

In modern societies or nations where positions of leadership and authority are attained through elections, existence of groups or associations of persons as political parties is an essential component of the entire democratic system. These groups and associations working harmoniously with the government or leadership of such societies or nations put in place the processes leading to elections into public offices and design administrative policies and programmes for good governance of such societies or nations<sup>1</sup>. Political parties nominate through democratic process, candidates<sup>2</sup> who are elected in a general elections to occupy leadership positions in the country, to administer and manage both human and material resources of the country as a government for a specified term of office for the common benefit and wellbeing of citizens and residents of the country.<sup>3</sup> Most nations operate multiple party systems while others limit the number of political parties to two or even one<sup>4</sup> thereby restraining the level of participation of citizens in the process of electing their leaders and participating effectively in the conduct of their affairs. With the absence of a vibrant and well organized party system, the formation and stability of governance and its purposes are always almost unachievable, hence a vibrant and people oriented political party system is an essential element in electing good leaders, formulating and implementing well thought-out government policies that will improve the living condition of the people at all times.

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<sup>1</sup>In Nigeria and most other democracies, political office holders are elected from candidates elected or selected and sponsored by political parties. Candidates must be sponsored by political parties before they are qualified to contest an election. See *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN) 1999* (as amended) s177(C) and the case of *Pati v Addu* (2019) 14 WRN p.1. There are no independent candidates in Nigeria elections.

<sup>2</sup> This is after party primary election among the aspirants.

<sup>3</sup> In some countries, four-year tenure of a maximum of two terms as it is the case in Nigeria and Ghana.

<sup>4</sup>For instance, China has Communist party and 8 minor registered parties; Democratic Republic of Korea (North Korea) has Workers Party with two minor parties that exist only on paper; Vietnam has the Communist Party; Cuba also has a single Communist Party. Others are Eritrea, Western Sahara and Burma where the opposition parties are prevented from taking public offices. See <<https://www.single.m.wikipedia> accessed 1st July, 2022.

## 2. Conceptual Clarification

### Political Party

Politics can be defined as the activities involved in getting and using power in public life, and being able to influence decisions that affect a country or a society.<sup>5</sup> It is an action that seems sensible and judicious.<sup>6</sup> 'Political', refers to anything relating or pertaining to the policy or the administration of government, state or national; connected with the state government or public affairs or different groups working in politics.<sup>7</sup> Political party, on the other hand, is a group of well-organized persons or individuals who come together usually with quite broad scopes and objectives with a cardinal purpose of getting their selected members into governmental positions through periodic elections.<sup>8</sup> Political parties can be seen as an advanced formation of pressure and interest groups with a differing purpose or target of holding onto or controlling power.<sup>9</sup> Political parties are defined by Herbert Simon as 'a system of independent activities characterized by a high degree of rational direction of behavior towards ends that are objects of common acknowledgement and expectation.'<sup>10</sup> Their functions include organizing forum for public opinions seeking, obtaining and conveying public demands to the national or state government for decision making and political selection. It is a veritable indicator of the degree of political advancement.<sup>11</sup>

### Party System

A party is a formally constituted political group that contests elections and attempts to form or participate in a government.<sup>12</sup> Party system can be defined as a concept in comparative Political Science concerning the system of government by political parties in a democratic country.<sup>13</sup> Party system can also be understood in terms of the number of political parties existing in a country. It is multiple party system<sup>14</sup> where there are many political parties and a single party system where there is only one party in the country.<sup>15</sup> Party system can also be associated with the pattern of intervention among political parties in electoral, legislative and governmental realms of a certain political circumstance.<sup>16</sup> It plays an important role in the processes leading to the election of public leaders and the formation of government, the system of government<sup>17</sup> and democracy. It also determines the means of tackling the problems associated or peculiar to a country, the level of development and changes desired to improve the wellbeing of citizens of a country. It is a determinant of the international and diplomatic affairs and relationship between a country and other countries.

### Democracy

Democracy can be defined as that form of government in which the sovereign power resides in and is exercised by the whole body of free citizens as distinguished from a monarchy, aristocracy or oligarchy<sup>18</sup>. It is described as a system of government with four key elements; a) A system for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections; b) Active participation of the people as citizens in politics and civil life; c) protection of the human rights of all citizens and d) the rule of law.<sup>19</sup> Democracy entails the application of the principles<sup>20</sup> of the rule of law, predictable and impartial. There should be political equality where every citizen can vote and be voted for and have the right to aspire to any public office including the highest office in the land and speak on public issues freely. The aim of every democratic government must be for the common good of all,

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<sup>5</sup> Hornsby, A.S. *Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary*, (6<sup>th</sup>edn., London Oxford University Press 2000) p.899.

<sup>6</sup> Definition from Oxford Language at <http://www.google.com> accessed 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2023

<sup>7</sup> A.S. Hornsby op.cit p. 899

<sup>8</sup> Ikedinachi Ayodele P. et al. 'Political Behaviour and Party Politics in a Democracy: A comparative Analysis of Ghana and Nigeria' in *WULFENLA Journal* vol. 22 No 3 March, 2015 Pp 554-555.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid* and see also Adetayo Olaniyiadeniran 'Analytical Study of Political Party System in Nigeria' in *Public Policy and Administration Research* (online) vol.5 No 12, 2015 @ <http://www.liste.org> p.1. accessed 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2023.

<sup>10</sup> See Herbert Simon 'Comments on the Theory of Organization' *American Political Science Review* XLVI No 4 p. 1130 cited by Ikedinachi op cit.

<sup>11</sup> See Ikedinachi, Ayodele P. et al op cit p. 554.

<sup>12</sup> See <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>> accessed 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2023

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>14</sup> In Nigeria, United States of America, Ghana etc, operate multiple party systems which in most cases is not in practice as only two parties would be known while others exist on paper.

<sup>15</sup> For instance, Vietnam and Cuba have the Communist Party

<sup>16</sup> Ikedinachi Ayodele P. et al op cit p. 554

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>18</sup> Garner B.A. *Black's Law Dictionary* (8<sup>th</sup>edn) USA, Minesota Thompson West Publishing 2004 p. 128.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>20</sup> Such as supremacy of law, equality before the law, accountability to the law, fairness in the application of the law, separation of governmental powers, participation of the people (through their representatives) in decision making, legal certainty.

personal freedoms, human dignity and being involved and informed of all happenings in the system<sup>21</sup> and respected. The four powerful pillars of democracy are; the legislature, executive, judiciary and the media and each pillar must act within its realm but not forgetting the general purpose and aim of government. Democracy can only be strengthened where these pillars are strong, free and complement each other<sup>22</sup>. There can never be democracy properly so called without a good political party system. A good political party system is the engine room for democracy.

### 3. Political Parties in Nigeria

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria<sup>23</sup> and the Electoral Act<sup>24</sup> are the laws that govern the establishment and regulate the existence, operation and administration of political parties in Nigeria. The Constitution<sup>25</sup> and the Electoral Act have restrictions to the powers or rights of individuals, groups or associations to form or function as political parties. No association shall function as a political party unless registered by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and its membership opened to all citizens of Nigeria irrespective of place of origin, circumstances of birth, sex, religion or ethnic grouping. No political party that bears or answer a name or logo or carry out activities that are related or concern any ethnic, religious or a particular geographical part of Nigeria shall be registered by INEC<sup>26</sup>. All political parties must ensure that the membership of the executive committee, their Constitution and activities reflect the national character of Nigeria.<sup>27</sup> The aims, programmes and objectives of political parties must conform with the provisions of Chapter II of the Constitution<sup>28</sup>. For accountability, the Constitution and the Electoral Act required a regular assets and financial statement of political parties to be submitted to INEC and where there is any contravention of the requirements, the National Assembly has powers to make a law for the punishment of any person contravening the provision<sup>29</sup>. The laws are aimed at establishing and instilling the required discipline, standards and procedure and processes of operation of political parties and to avoid any attempt to lower the standards including the federal character and the avoidance of sectional, religious, regional or ethnic sentiments influencing the activities, engagements and objectives of political parties.

### 4. Political Parties in Ghana

Like in Nigeria, Ghana has laws<sup>30</sup> and institutions<sup>31</sup> establishing and regulating political parties, their activities and electoral systems of Ghana. Citizens of voting age have the statutory right to form or join any political party of their choice subject to the Constitution of Ghana<sup>32</sup> which provided for the right of citizens to form political parties, the right to vote, organisation of political parties, shaping of the political will of the people, national character, to avoid sectional, regional, religious or tribal sentiments in forming and running of political parties, and the promotion of democracy<sup>33</sup>. Also like in Nigeria, all organizations or groups that want to become political parties must be registered by the Electoral Commission of Ghana and the membership of its executive committee must adhere to national character and chosen from all the regions of Ghana and the parliament has no powers to make law establishing or authorizing the establishment of a body or movement with the powers to impose on the people of Ghana a set of objectives of a religious or political nature<sup>34</sup>. For accountability and a

<sup>21</sup> B.A Garner *op cit*.

<sup>22</sup> See G.A.I. Nwogu, 'Democracy: its Meaning and Dissenting Opinions of the Political Class in Nigeria: A philosophical Approach' in *Journal of Education and Practice* (vol.6, No 4, 2015 p. 131. See also De Torque, 'Democracy in America' in Richard Heffner, (eds.) cited by D Asada 'The three Aims of Government in Nigeria: Towards a Harmonious Co-existence in Nigeria's Multi-Party Democracy' in *New Vista in Law* (vol.2) Faculty of Law, University of Jos, St Stephen Publishers 2002) p.290

<sup>23</sup> 1999 (as amended) hereinafter referred to as (CFRN)

<sup>24</sup> 2010 (as amended)

<sup>25</sup> See ss 221-224 and the *Electoral Act* 2010 ss 78, 80, 81, 82, 86, 89, 91, 93

<sup>26</sup> See ss 223 (1) (a), (b) (2), (b), (c)

<sup>27</sup> See s 223 (2) (b)

<sup>28</sup> See *CFRN 1999* (as amended) S. 224

<sup>29</sup> See *CFRN* (as amended) 1999 S 225(2)(3) a-b (4) (5) & (6) and the *Electoral Acts* (as amended) S. 81, 91, 93 on measures put in place by the Constitution and the Electoral Act to avoid corrupt practices by politicians and political parties such as periodic financial and assets reports to INEC.

<sup>30</sup> For instance, the *Constitution of Ghana 1992*, provide for political party's formation, registration and administration likewise the *Political Parties Law Act 574* (2000). *Electoral Commission of Ghana (Act 451)* of 1993 and the *Presidential Elections Law 1992* (PNDCL 285).

<sup>31</sup> Ghana, like in Nigeria has the Electoral commission of Ghana as its election umpire headed by a chairman.

<sup>32</sup> See the *Constitution of Ghana 1992* Articles. 55(1)(2)(3)(4)(5)(6)(9) & (14)& 56 and the *Political Parties Law Act 574* (2000) s. 1(1) & (2), 2(1)(2) & (3), 3(1)(2) & 4(1)(2)&(3).

<sup>33</sup> See *Constitution of Ghana 1992* S 55 (1) and the *Political Parties Law Act 574*(2000) S1(1)&(2).

<sup>34</sup> See *Constitution of Ghana 1992*, Articles 55(4)&(9) and 56.

check on corrupt practices, as it is also in Nigeria, a registered political party must make periodic declaration of its revenue and accounts to the Electoral Commission of Ghana<sup>35</sup>.

Political parties in Ghana statutorily have the duty to ensure that citizens have access to proper information dissemination on political ideas, social and economic programmes of a national character and shall sponsor candidates in elections<sup>36</sup>. Political parties shall also ensure that citizens know their right to vote, to participate in shaping the political will of the people and policies and programmes of the government<sup>37</sup>. The electoral laws of Ghana, like in Nigeria have provisions against political coercion or suppression of lawful political engagements or activities of any political party. People should have the freedom to engage in lawful political activities without fear of intimidation or persecution by any person or authority<sup>38</sup>. However, despite all these lofty legal provisions, Ghana though better than Nigeria, politically and administratively is yet to get it clearly right though it has attained remarkable political progressions by the years.

## 5. The Comparative Analysis

Political party system in Nigeria date back during the colonial rule when Herbert Macaulay formed the first group that can be properly called a political party – The Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP) in 1923<sup>39</sup>. The NNDP was able to bring together several Lagos interest groups into one group that succeeded in taking part in politics and contesting elections into public offices<sup>40</sup>. The main aim of the NNDP was to put candidates into the parliament, it however had a wider aim of promoting democracy in Nigeria and to increase the participation of Nigerians in the administrative, social, economic and educational development of Nigeria with ultimate aim of attaining political independence<sup>41</sup>. The NNDP continued to dominate politics in Lagos until the Nigeria Youth Movement (NYM) ended its dominance in 1938. Party politics then was targeting at how each party can dominate one another. The rivalry continued among the NNDP<sup>42</sup>, NYM and Action Group (AG) led by late chief Obafemi Awolowo. When Nigeria became independent in 1960, it started with the parliamentary system of government as its first republic which was unfortunately frustrated by power grasping and corruption leading to very serious civil tumult which paved way for the military to take over power in 1966<sup>43</sup>. Between 1966 and 1979 all efforts made to enthrone democratic or civil rule in Nigeria were defeated by incessant military coups and a bloody civil war. In 1979, the military administration decided to adopt the American style of constitutional democracy<sup>44</sup>. There were high hopes of political modernization in Nigeria. These hopes were dashed when the 1979 elections were announced and the Shagari's second term government was removed by a coup d'état in 1983 due to unsettled political and ethnic discord complicated by rioting in the Southern part of Nigeria following a declaration of Shagari victory for a second term in office<sup>45</sup>. Political parties of the Second Republic such as the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP), the United Party of Nigeria (UPN), and People Redemption Party (PRP) were all founded on regional lines having their presidential candidates from the regions they were seemingly created for. Campaigns and voting were done on those regional preferences, which contributed to the failure of the Second Republic<sup>46</sup>. The Nigeria political party system has the character of political associations coming together to form a strong force to enable them win political leadership of officers from ruling political parties. This happened in 1964 with the formation of the United Progressives Grand

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<sup>35</sup> See Constitution of Ghana 1992, Article 55(14) and the Political Parties Law Act 574 (2000) s1(1)&(2).

<sup>36</sup> See Constitution of Ghana 1992, Article 55(3)(4)(5) and the Political Parties Law Act 574(2000) S 12(1)(2)(3)

<sup>37</sup> See Constitution of Ghana 1992 Article 55(1)(2).

<sup>38</sup> See Political Parties Law Act 574 (2000) S 2(3) and Constitution of Ghana 1992, Article 56.

<sup>39</sup> Herbert Macaulay took advantage of the Clifford Constitution which was the first written Constitution that seems to have given a lee way to more participation of Nigerians in politics and more contribution to the government of its people.

<sup>40</sup> The NNDP won all the seats in the election of 1923, 1928 and 1933.

<sup>41</sup> See Martin Meredith, *The Fate of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence* (Public Affairs publishing: New York 2005 p. 196 see <http://www.exm.wikipedia.org/wikinigeria> accessed 14th August, 2023

<sup>42</sup> The Party's name was adopted by Samuel Akintola for his party as part of a process of unseating the left-leaning Action Group from power in the Western region.

<sup>43</sup> Political parties and their supporters refused to agree in any aspect of the whole system. It was survival of the fittest and winner takes all era. See also Ikedinachi Ayodele P. *et al op. cit* p. 558 and Adeniran, Adetayo Olaniyi *op cit* p.1

<sup>44</sup> Despite the adoption of the American style of democracy, Nigeria political party system and democracy had never been like that of America in all aspects.

<sup>45</sup> President Shagari could barely settle down in office after winning his second term when his government was ousted by Major General Mohammedu Buhari due to serious protests and unrest in Nigeria and according to the military junta corruption and failure of government.

<sup>46</sup> The NPN operated as a Northern party with Shagari as its presidential candidate, NPP as an Eastern party with Azikiwe as its presidential candidate, UPN, as a Western party with Awolowo as its presidential candidate despite the unconstitutionality of such arrangement

Alliance (UPGA) and in 1982, the Progressive Parties Alliance (PPA)<sup>47</sup> instead of strengthening existing political party system has also witnessed and lived with politicians who go into party formation just to seek election into political offices at the local and state tiers of government without any attempt of seeking election at the federal level and in some cases to having more formidable political bargaining power<sup>48</sup>.

The party system has never encouraged nor tolerated existence of opposition parties by the ruling party. The ruling party does go into luring and in some cases intimidating influential opposition party members to join the ruling party to avoid having a strong opposition that may take over power from it in the next election<sup>49</sup>. At a time, political leaders felt that the failure of the party system and governance in general in Nigeria was due to multiplicity of political parties that at a point, encouraged high influence of ethnicity, regionalism and tribalism in Nigeria, as political parties and their activities tilted strongly towards these divisive and antithetical behaviours and activities against the unity and democratic development of Nigeria. This led to an attempt at running a two-party system in 1989 by the General Babangida's military administration<sup>50</sup>. General Babangida's administration established the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in a bid to allay the fears and damages the multiple party system has created in Nigeria and to encourage national integration and reduce the authority and influence powerful individuals have over political parties<sup>51</sup>. The two-party system at its inception seems to have neutralized some of the forces<sup>52</sup> that were militating against the enthronement and sustenance of democracy in Nigeria until the annulment of the June 12, 1993 general election<sup>53</sup>.

The First, Second and Third Republics seem not to have added anything good into the party politics and democracy in Nigeria, then came the Fourth Republic in 1999 wherein various political parties were formed and very liberal laws made to encourage multiplicity of political parties aimed at affording a larger number of Nigerians the opportunity to participate in politics and have some contribution to how they are governed<sup>54</sup>. Despite the experience and failures of the other republics due clearly to corruption and selfish regional and tribal sentiments, the Fourth Republic political party arrangements and activities never seem to have been carried out bearing in mind well known and obvious consequences of not playing nationalistic politics in Nigeria. Parties with regional agenda were formed<sup>55</sup> based on those old and destructive sentiments as usual. The same mentality and behaviours of politicians from the past failed republics are still being experienced till date. The aim of political parties and politicians is to get power and have unrestrained access to the resources of the country hence any feelings that, they might not be allowed to get party ticket for the next elections, or failure to get a party ticket, lead to them decamping to other political parties to enable them be given tickets to contest elections. Party ideology is of no use and importance to the Nigeria politicians.

Like Nigeria, Ghana had Independence from its colonial master<sup>56</sup> and thereafter its political history was largely marked by incessant military incursion into politics with high level of abuse of human rights<sup>57</sup>. Apart from the

<sup>47</sup>Likewise, in the build up to the 2015 general election in Nigeria, politicians from the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) a few from the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) came together to form the All Peoples congress to take over power from the ruling PDP and have little or nothing to offer now in power because their aim was to get power.

<sup>48</sup>Some politicians form political parties only to concede power to any political party declared winner of an election and in turn be settled by the victorious party with either money or appointment. Some even challenge the victory in court and later withdraw same after being settled.

<sup>49</sup> Not that they have anything better to offer to Nigeria.

<sup>50</sup>Public funds and tax payers' money were used to build party secretariats for the two political parties aimed at a permanent and concrete establishment of these parties in all the states and local government areas in Nigeria giving them their expected national images.

<sup>51</sup>See Ikedinachi Ayodele P. *et al op cit* 559; Adeniran, Adetayo Olaniyi *op. cit* p.3 and Giovanni M. Carbone, 'Political Party Systems in Africa: Themes and Research Perspectives' in *World Political Science Review* vol. 3, issue 3, article 2007 p.6.

<sup>52</sup>Such as ethnicity, regionalism, tribalism and overbearing influence of rich and powerful individuals in the Nigeria political system.

<sup>53</sup>Generally adjudged to be the fairest and most credible election in Nigeria said to have been overwhelmingly won by late M.K.O. Abiola.

<sup>54</sup>This has rather led to the springing up of mushroom associations called political parties that have never contested or won any elections till date.

<sup>55</sup> ACN was formed as a regional party for the west after AD.

<sup>56</sup> Ghana had independence in 1957 from the same colonial masters as Nigeria, that is Britain.

<sup>57</sup>This is with exception to the period of Kwame Nkrumah as President of Ghana in the first republic from 1960-1966. See Ikedinachi Ayodele P. *et al op. cit* p. 555. See also Kwame Botwe-Asamoah, *Kwame Nkrumah's politico-cultural Thoughts and Policies: An African Centered Paradigm for the Second Phase of African Revolution* (Routledge, New York & London

first republic under the reigns of Kwame Nkrumah, the second<sup>58</sup> and third<sup>59</sup> republics were short-lived by coup d'état. From 1992 to date, however, Ghana has been able to run a multiparty system and successfully conducted six series of elections, that is, presidential and parliamentary and like Nigeria<sup>60</sup> had a peaceful transfer of power from the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) to the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) in a national election in 2000<sup>61</sup>. Beyond holding successful national election and smooth transfer of power to successive government, unlike Nigeria, Ghana has been adjudged to have made very remarkable advancement in entrenching democratic fundamentals such as running a multi-party system and adherence to the principles of rule of law, human rights promotion and hold regular national elections that are advancing in their freeness and fairness<sup>62</sup> with a lively unconfined and self-reliant media and civil societies<sup>63</sup>. The first test of the existence of democracy in any country is entrenchment of a vibrant political party system where well established political parties contest and compete for political positions through well organized, free and fair periodic elections. Ghana, like its sister country Nigeria, started in the right direction after independence with civil rule leading towards democracy. Unfortunately, the military could not allow this aspiration of entrenching democracy in the country to take its expected course thereby affecting its multi-party system<sup>64</sup> which depleted the growth of political party system in Ghana and reduced it to a single party system<sup>65</sup>. In 1992, after a decade long period of political uncertainties, Ghana once again legalized<sup>66</sup> the multi-party system and abolished the single party and proscribed the unconstitutional bringing down of democratically elected government. However, in practice and like in Nigeria, two parties<sup>67</sup> are well known, influential and more institutionalized in Ghana. Like in Nigeria, the NDP and the NPP pay lip service to the commitment to deepening democratic rule in Ghana without doing much to improve the functionality and strength of other political parties in the country<sup>68</sup>.

At least in Ghana, unlike in Nigeria, the two leading political parties<sup>69</sup> clearly propagate and insist on certain ideologies that seem to be targeted at improving the wellbeing of the people and impacting on governmental policies and programmes. The NPP is seen as a pro-market and pro-business party that emphasizes property owning democracy – the right of every citizen to own property, while the NDC that started as a revolutionary populist party emphasizes social democracy<sup>70</sup>. Like in Nigeria, the two leading political parties in Ghana, the NDC and the NPP have strong regional and ethnic inclination and affiliations than ideologies. While the NDC is generally seen as an Ewe<sup>71</sup> party, the NPP is as well perceived as an Ashanti/Akan<sup>72</sup> region party despite the constitutional provision against regional or ethnic political party system. Like in Nigeria, Ghana has to a large extent ethnic influence and bias in its voting pattern. Each ethnic group vote candidates of their group or those sponsored or supported by political leaders from their region or ethnic group<sup>73</sup>. There are also verifiable allegations of discrimination against some ethnic groups by successive political office holders in terms of

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2005) Pp 5-20 and Kenneth W. Grundy, 'Nkrumah's Theory of Underdevelopment: An Analysis of Recurrent Themes' (JSTOR vol 13, No 3 April 1963 pp. 438-454 @ <https://www.jstor.org> accessed 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2023

<sup>58</sup> From 1969-1972

<sup>59</sup> From 1979-1981

<sup>60</sup> Due to military takeover of government, the civil regimes hardly lasted up to three years in all cases.

<sup>61</sup> See generally Ikedinachi Ayodele P. et al op cit p. 555 and Bjorn Hetine, 'Soldiers and Politics: The case of Ghana' in *Journal of peace research* No 2 vol xvii, 1980 pp 173-193.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid

<sup>63</sup> The media in Ghana became increasingly bolder and played its role of holding government accountable on behalf of the masses. See Ikedinachi Ayodele P. *et al op cit*.

<sup>64</sup> This was for the first time enshrined in the 1992 Constitution, see Articles 55 and 56.

<sup>65</sup> Ghana became defacto single party state in practice and this was legalized in 1964. See Ikedinachi Ayodele P. et al

<sup>66</sup> Despite the Constitutional abolition of single party system in 1992, Ghana still has two parties NDC and NPP dominating the political sphere in the Fourth Republic controlling 222 seats out of 230 parliamentary seats.

<sup>67</sup> In Nigeria, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC) dominate despite the so-called multi-party system

<sup>68</sup> While in power, these political parties do everything possible to weaken other political parties including intimidating and forcing key stalwarts of the parties to join the ruling party.

<sup>69</sup> That is the NDC and the NPP while in Nigeria we have the PDP and APC

<sup>70</sup> See Cadman Atta Mills, 'Politics, Policy and Implementation: The Ghanaian paradox', *Brookings, African in focus*, Wednesday July 18, 2018; Franklin Obeng-Odoom 'Nature of Ideology in Ghana's 2012 Elections' in *Journal of African Elections* (vol. 12, No 2 2011) pp 1-27 and P Rath bone Businessmen in Politics: Party Struggle in Ghana 1949-57' in the *Journal of Developments studies* (vol. 9 No 3 1973) and A Thomas, Thomas Rawls, 'Adam Smith and an Argument: From complexity of Property Democracy' in *The Good Society* (vol. 21 No1 2012).

<sup>71</sup> The Ewes are an ethnic group that occupies the South Eastern part of Ghana and also part of neighbouring Togo and Benin.

<sup>72</sup> The Ashanti/Akan both occupy the Ashanti region of modern Ghana.

<sup>73</sup> Both the NDC and NPP had been accused of discriminating against the Akans and Ewes. President John Kufour and his New Patriotic Party has also been accused of low presence of his government at the Volta Region and the Ewes and almost 67% of the Ministers of the government has the Akans background who constitute above 49% of the Ghanaian population.

government presence in the regions<sup>74</sup>. Political activities in Ghana, like in Nigeria always go into slumber after election and only to resurface towards the next elections. There are also inadequacies in the availability of free and level playing grounds for political participation by all irrespective of religion, gender and place of origin and proper attention given to the general wellbeing of the people. However, Ghana political system is far better than what we have in Nigeria.

## **6. Conclusion and Recommendations**

From the above analysis, it is very clear that Nigeria and Ghana share a lot in terms of their politics and parties systems. Though Ghana got independence before Nigeria and lucky to have a better start after independence than Nigeria by having a sincere patriot and nationalist – Kwame Nkrumah as its first President with less ethnic and religious preferences, challenges and differences, it suffered the same fate like Nigeria in terms of unwarranted military incursion and ousting of democratically elected civilian regimes. It is also very clear that the main intentions of people forming and funding political parties in Nigeria and Ghana were not for the service of the people and the development of the countries but for personal and parochial sentiments and aims. It is also clear that both countries are not where they ought to be, considering both human and material resources invested or wasted in the almost directionless quest for democracy and good governance. Both countries are still battling with anti-democratic forces such as corruption, nepotism, tribalism, disrespect and low observance of the principles of the rule of law, low press freedom and respect for human rights<sup>75</sup>. Granted that both countries seem to have successfully organized and conducted periodic and regular elections and government transferred powers to opposition parties, the credibility of such elections are still in doubt. There still exist limited and restricted access to the right and freedom of people to participate in elections in both nations. Women are not adequately carried along in political activities and in the attainment of public offices. The poor are getting poorer while the rich are getting richer. Insecurity is in the increase particularly in Nigeria and the political atmosphere is hazy and very uncertain. Abrasions are obviously high due to the inordinate conducts of politicians and leaders<sup>76</sup>. However, in all facets of party politics and governance, Ghana obviously stands better than Nigeria. It has better infrastructures; the people are more comfortable and expectant. The electoral system is far more credible than Nigeria and inter and intra party maneuverings lesser and seems more controllable.

The following measures may be helpful. Both countries should improve their modes and means of regulating and monitoring party activities, their sources of income and spending. Effective legal and institutional measures should be put in place against the abuse by elected public office holders of the right to decamp to other political parties while in office, which is in most cases done on selfish reasons and not for public interest. More improvements and total over-haul of the electoral processes, the umpires and political parties are urgently needed as this will certainly reduce electoral violence and the hindrances militating against the development of democracy in both nations. Realistic and enduring conditions and guidelines be put in place for political party registration, existence and functioning. This will curtail proliferation of mushroom political parties who fail in the performance of all duties and functions of political parties properly so called after registration. Detering penalties be provided against political parties who go against laid down laws, rules, regulations and purpose of their existence.

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<sup>74</sup>Like in Nigeria, women are not accorded enough place and support to gain political position, in as much as the situation in Ghana looks better and promising than that of Nigeria.

<sup>75</sup>However, as earlier pointed out Ghana has a better adherence to the pillars of democracy which includes; conduct of periodic credible elections, respect for human rights, press freedom and adherence to the principle of rule of law.

<sup>76</sup> Particularly in the present dispensation in Nigeria.