

THE RISE AND FALL OF IDEOLOGICAL AND NON-IDEOLOGICAL PARTIES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE WORKERS' PARTY OF BRAZIL AND PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF NIGERIA

Nwobashi, H. N., Nnaji, F. C. and Itumo, A.

Department of Political Science,
Ebonyi State University, PMB 053, Abakaliki
Corresponding author's email: nwobashih@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The workers' Party of Brazil (Partido dos Trabalhadores, PT) came to power in 2002 and ruled for thirteen years before losing power in 2016. The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) of Nigeria was formed in 1998 and clinched power in 1999 and ruled for sixteen years before it lost power to the opposition in 2015. This study examines the resiliency, undoing and eventual fall of two large parties that emerged and ruled very populous countries in the developing world. The study generated its data from secondary sources and employed content analytical technique. Adopting the group theory of politics, the study underscores that the tendencies of both parties to virtually rule unchallenged through election racketeering and dirty deals resulted to institutional decay and widespread dissatisfaction. Thus, as the economy and the society deteriorated, as exemplified by rising poverty, unbridled corruption, civil unrest and insurgency, the public woke up through organized opposition and dethroned these ruling parties. The study recommends that institutional strengthening and political accountability are critical to sustainable democratic rule and ruling parties must constantly watch out for the patience of citizens as they would seize every available space to engineer a change in the status quo when pushed to the extreme.

Key Words: Ruling Parties, Political Accountability, Civil unrest, Democratic Rule

INTRODUCTION

In all democracies across the globe, democratic sustenance is engineered through the existence and operation of political parties. Thus, Atelhe and Egwu (2015) rightly observed that in some situations where political parties and associations are undermined, elections that are credible and transparent are hard to come by. The stability of political institutions especially democratic structures is anchored on how effective and efficient political parties are able to manage their structure and resources. On this basis, Odofin (2004) contended that political parties are formed so that opinion and feeling of the people on any public matter could be accessed through organized election.

From the foregoing, it becomes imperative to note that the sustenance of democratic rule in both Nigeria and Brazil is not unconnected with the institutionalization of multi-party politics sequel to the departure of military rule in the aforementioned states in 1999 and 1988 respectively (Levin, 1999 and the World Fact Book, 2018). Comparatively, the two countries share certain identifiable characteristics in common. Thus, whereas,

Brazil ranks as the most populous country in both South America and Latin America with an estimated population of 208 million; Nigeria on the other hand stands out as the most populous country in the continent of Africa with an estimated population of 186 million (CIA World Fact Book, 2018). The duo similarly operates under the political framework of a presidential federal republic and multi-party democracy.

This paper therefore sets out to examine the path to power elongation and the eventual tragic flaws of two famous political parties in Brazil and Nigeria namely: the Workers' Party and the People's Democratic Party PDP. It specifically interrogates the political and socio-economic undoing of the operators of the PDP and the Workers Party respectively. Thus, the consequence became the people's chain reaction and popular will to dethrone the duo from the helm of affair in Nigeria and Brazil.

General Conceptualizations

Essentially, a political party is first and foremost a social group. Thus, Ilo and Udeogu (2018) were apt to note that it is an organization of men and women of a political



society with common interests targeted at canvassing for votes so as to win elections and be duly seen as having the requisite legitimacy to form the government of the day. Accordingly, election therefore legitimizes the claim of a political party to leadership.

From the foregoing, political party been conceived as associations formally organized with the explicit and declared purpose of acquiring and or maintaining legal control, either singly or in a coalition with other similar associations, over the personnel and policy of the government of an actual or prospective state (Dowse & Hughes, 1972 as cited in Obikaeze and Udallla, 2016). In a sheer scholarly effort to distinguish between a political party from a mere interest group, Matlosa and Shale (2008) argued that a political party, unlike an interest group, aims to capture state power and control the public policy-making process within the confines of the constitutional and legal framework of the given country.

Emphasizing on the roles political parties play in a democratized polity, Agbaja (1999: P. 196) identified the following as the general functions of political parties:

1. Representations
2. Elite formation and recruitment
3. Goal formation
4. Interest articulation and aggregation
5. Socialization and mobilization
6. Organization of government

In recognition of the relevance of political parties in democratic consolidation, Jackson (1994) posited that political parties and elections are not only organically linked but also symbiotically related. This symbiotic relationship as it relates to the Nigerian state is explicitly encapsulated in section 221 of the 1999 constitution as amended. It states thus:

No association, other than a political party shall canvass for votes for any candidates at any elections or contribute to the fund of any Political party or to the election expenses of any candidate at an election.

Indeed, there cannot be sustainable democracy where there is absence of healthy political party competition. Accordingly, Yusuf and Tukur (2012) observed that political parties constitute an important mechanism for

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the sustenance of democratic politics as they tended to provide a stable pattern of expectations, activities and behaviour for peaceful change of government from one faction of the ruling class to another or from one set of individuals within the ruling class to another. In all, both ruling party and opposition parties combine to define the picture of a country's democracy and reflect the people's will depending on the different ideological tradition and the socio-economic realities of the society in question.

The Worker's Party of Brazil: Socio-political Ideology and Economic Leaning

The Workers' Party (Portuguese: *Partidodos Trabalhadores*, PT) is a democratic socialist political party in Brazil. Essentially, the PT was launched in 1980 and has since then become one of the largest movements of Latin America. The party was born out of a coalition of labour unions, leftist intellectuals and social justice groups opposed to military dictatorship (Sciad–finho, 2015)

While the Workers' Party originally espoused traditional democratic socialist values, it has since moderated toward centre-left orientation in Brazil's political spectrum. The party governed at the federal level in a coalition government with other parties during which it controlled the presidency for thirteen (13) years from 2003 to 2016 during which LuizInacio Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff served as Presidents of Brazil (Claire, 2016 and Hunter, 2010),

Fundamentally, the goals of the PT are anchored squarely on economic growth, social inclusion, the distribution of income and wealth, employment creation and the expansion of infrastructure (Rigby, 2017). With the highest approved rating in the history of the country, The *Partido dos Trabalhadores*, (PT) under President LuizInacio Lula da Silva's administration had the good fortune of ruling brazil (2003-2010) at a time of global commodities boom which also provided the resources that allowed the country to weather and then delay the effects of the 2008 financial crisis. Along with China, India, Russia and South Africa, Brazil became at the time, a part of the so-called BRICS, a group of big emerging markets that became key drivers of the global economy (Hunter, 2010). The PT government representatives played a key role in advancing the BRICS as well as other developing countries agenda in the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund and the United Nations (Rigby, 2017).



The Manifesto of the People's Democratic Party

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) was formed in 1998 in the wake of the democratic era in Nigeria by members of organization, especially the G-18 and G-34 who were opposed to military dictatorship of the General Sani Abacha regime. As aptly captured by Ilo and Udeogu (2018), the resolution on formation of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) was passed at Sheraton Hotel, Abuja on Wednesday 19th August, 1998, and the same date the manifesto of the party was adopted. In addition to the "Resolution on party formation" the 36-paged Manifesto document has 32 issues-based items namely:

1. Resolution on Party Formation
2. Covenant with the People of Nigeria
3. Political Objectives
4. The Indivisibility of the Nigeria Polity
5. The Judiciary and the Administration of Justice
6. Economy
7. Agriculture
8. Rural Development
9. Industrialization
10. Health
11. Education
12. Science and Technology
13. Defence
14. Transport
15. Communication
16. Internal Security
17. Energy
18. Water Supply
19. Labour Employment and Wages
20. Natural Mineral Industries
21. Iron and Steel
22. Youth and Sports
23. The Nigeria Culture
24. Women
25. Human Rights
26. Environmental Obligations
27. Civil Service
28. Traditional Rulers
29. Housing
30. Tourism
31. Land and

32. Foreign Policy (the Manifesto of the Peoples Democratic Party, 1998, p.2)

Since the rebirth of democracy rule in May, 1999 the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) which prides itself as Africa's largest political party had won four consecutive presidential elections – 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011. Prior to the 2015 general election, Nigeria's 16 year old democracy has not enjoyed a vibrant opposition since its take off in 1999 until the coalition of parties that formed the All Progressive Congress (APC) routed the PDP in the 2015 general election (Eme and Idike, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

This paper rests on the premise and postulations of the Michigan School of thought otherwise called the psychological model for the explanation of voter's behavior and electoral change. The central preposition of the Michigan School of thought is that political affiliation or partisanship principally determines voter's behavior (Dalton, 2001). Put differently, the model posits that voters' socio- psychological needs at a particular point in time largely predetermine their political party identification and how they evaluate candidate on issues and capacity to solve problems (Erdman, 2007, Cartels, 1998; and Miler 1991). Essentially, the Michigan School provided a framework that combines sociological and psychological approaches to explain voter's choice of which political party to belong, which candidate to vote and of course how the people generally perceive the capacities of candidate to be able to solve problems.

The applicability of the Michigan school of thought (psychological model) to the present study rests on the premise that the defeat the Workers Party of Brazil after 13 years in power and the Peoples Democratic Party after 16 years in power are not unconnected with the popular feelings of dissatisfaction or disillusionment toward these parties by the electorates. As respectively observed by Hunter (2010) and Rigby (2017) the downfall of the *Partidodos Trabalhadores* (PT) (Workers Party) of Brazil was preceded by massive protest, arising from the parties blatant abandonment of its pro – social and pro – employment programmes for neo- liberal policies. Hence, this policy choice dampened the support for the PT among the organized working class that has long served as the base of the party.

Similarly, the popular perception of unbridle corruption within the workers party led government especially the Petrobas scandal in the state petroleum company in



which over 50 members of congress from the PT were implicated in a massive US \$ 3.7 billion scandal contributed greatly to the party's defeat by the Far-Right political party- the Social Liberal Party (Lero and Bello, 2015; Charner and Reverdosa, 2018).

On the side of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) of Nigeria, it is argued that the inability of successive administrations and particularly Jonathan administration to tackle headlong insecurity, corruption, poverty and unemployment added to lack of internal democracy in the party, cut short its boast of power retention for 60 years (Egwemi, 2015; and Nwobashi, 2015). Hence, by the time APC supporters chanted "change" wherever they went, it seemed to have caught the mood and the March/April 2015 general election saw the ultimate humiliation and dethronement of the PDP from the seat of government in Abuja.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted qualitative research method and sourced its data from secondary sources notably journal articles, internet materials, newspapers, textbooks and other related data. We used explanatory research design and content analysis technique of data analysis. Essentially, investigation was carried out to assess the activities of the two former ruling parties in Brazil and Nigeria respectively. To this end, the study interrogated such factors as unbridled corruption, vote buying, economic decline, insecurity, unemployment and poverty as catalysts to the routing of the Workers' Party and the People's Democratic Party in 2016 and 2015 respectively.

ANALYTICAL DISCUSSIONS

The paper critically discusses and analyses the fundamental factors that ultimately constituted the tragic flaws of the Workers' Party and the PDP. The aim is to juxtapose these variables and establish their comparative relevance to the study.

Tragic Flaws of the Workers Party of Brazil:

1. Unbridled Corruption:

Indeed, the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Workers' Party) of Brazil was ensnared by series of scandalous corruption especially the infamous Petrobras scandal and the Lava Jato scandal. While tension has been building since Brazil's economy began shrinking in 2011, a major opportunity for the rightist parties came in 2014 when

the Petrobras scandal broke out in which top officials of the ruling workers' party were implicated in a massive US\$3.7 billion scandal centered around the state owned oil company-Petrobras (Lero and Bello, 2015). Powerful members of the PT such as former President Dilma Rouseff was indicted and consequently impeached in 2016 in connection with high profile corruption scandal involving her role as chairman of Petrobras. Similarly her reputation for improving the lot of the poor weakened as the economy shrank by 3.8 percent with accompanying high inflation which reached 10 percent in 2015 (Sciad-Finho, 2015). It was against this backdrop that a record 3.5 million people took to the streets on March 13, 2016 to demand for Dilma's impeachment.

In the same vein, former President Lula da Silva was caught in a wide-ranging 4 year anti-graft probe and eventually sentenced to a 12 year imprisonment for corruption and money laundering in April, 2017 (Rigby, 2017).

2. Vote Buying and Legislative Racketeering

The PT has been a subject of constant criticism and condemnation over its notoriety during election periods in Brazil. Thus Lero and Bello (2015) aptly noted that Lula's administration had severally resorted to bribing non-PT members of the Brazilian congress to allow the passage legislations and this got the party in trouble.

Following the 2002 general elections, the PT held only 17 and 18 percent of the Senate seats and Chamber of Deputies respectively. In a bid to boost its national outlook, the party operator and top executives once more resorted to bribing congress members to ensure cross-carpeting and legislative passage. Indeed, this resulted to party's acceptance of corruption tainted candidate just to ensure majority number in both the Senate and Chamber of deputies (House Representatives) (Rigby, 2017 and Hunter, 2010).

3. Misguided Policy Implementation and Ideological Shift

According to Claire (2016), the Workers' Party of Brazil is widely acknowledged as the most important and well-organized party of the left in Latin America today. The Lula years from 2002 to 2010 exhibited an aggressive policy aimed at reducing poverty and inequality. This became manifest as inequality decreased from a GINI coefficient of 0.59 in 2001 to 0.53 in 2012; income growth for low wage earners in which the income of the 5 percent poorest grew 550 percent faster than 5 percent



richest between (2001 and 2012) (Hunter, 2012). In the same vein, there was increased spending on education and health by the federal government (13 percent of GDP in 2003 to over 16 percent in 2011).

However, when President Dilma Rouseff took over from Lula, she quickly turned around from the pro-social and pro-employment programmes of her party- the PT to neo liberal policies (Claire, 2016). This policy choice dampened the support for the PT among the organized working class that has long served as the base of the party. Expectations that keeping unemployment low, focusing on growth and maintaining social programmes benefitting the poor would be her priorities were punctured by her raising interest rates just three days after the October 2014 elections. Coupled with this was her appointment of Joaquim Levy, an aggressive fiscal conservative as finance minister.

4. Lack of Internal Democracy

The beginning of the end of the PT started immediately President Lula took the decision of changing the orientation of the Workers' Party from a hard core left-socialist party to a centre-left social-democratic orientation. This paradigm shift ignited internal crisis following the refusal of major hardliners of the party to embrace the new political position of the party. The internal disagreements and crisis came to a climax in December 2003 when four prominent members of the Workers' Party in the congress left the party namely: Joao Batista Oliveira de Aranjó (a member of the Chamber of Deputies) and Senator Heloisa Helena (Sciad-Finho, 2015). In the same trend, another 112 members of the PT abandoned the party on 30th January, 2005 stating that the party is no longer an instrument of transformation but an instrument of the status quo (Claire, 2016).

The Debacles and Ultimate Fall of the People's Democratic Party (PDP)

In this respect, Nwobashi (2015) adduced and explained the factors that led to the defeat of the ruling party in 2015 elections as below:

1. The challenge of Monstrous Corruption

The PDP failed to address the monster of corruption between 1999 to 2015. Thus, Nwobashi (2015) specifically noted that Nigeria under the watch of Jonathan regularly remained one of the lowest ranked nations by Transparency International (TI) in its corruption perception index. President Goodluck

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Jonathan believed that he was committed to fighting corruption and that Nigeria was winning the war on corruption but the TI (2014) released its ranking of corrupt nations and Nigeria occupied the position of 136 out of 175 countries. Okoh (2015) pointed out clearly that Jonathan's Administration was the worst administration with respect to fighting corruption. He stated further that corruption was institutionalized and democracy was replaced by "Nairaincracy" or "Dollaraincracy" in Jonathan's administration. Essentially, Okoh (2015) cited in Nwobashi (2015) revealed that Jonathan's refusal to allow the Country's anti-corruption agencies off the chain to prosecute those indicted as below:

KPMG report on the large scale corruption in Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) audit report, which exposed 10 years of corruption in the upstream and downstream sectors of the oil and gas, pension funds corruption reports, corruption report in the capital market and missing and 20 billion dollars from NNPC account among others constitute the bewildering instances of his failure to tackle corruption (Nwobashi, 2015 pp. 173).

Against this backdrop, Falana (2012) decried that corruption is being carried out under Jonathan administration to the extent that the war against corruption has been lost completely. Not easily forgotten were the corruption indictments of the former Minister of Petroleum Mrs. Dieziani Allison Madueke up to the tune of 10 billion naira and that of then Minister of Aviation, Mrs. Stella Oduah over the purchase of BMW Vehicles with millions of naira (Melaye, 2013 and Okoh, 2015)

2. National Insecurity

The spate of insecurity orchestrated by the Boko Haram Islamist Insurgency in the North – East of Nigeria threatened the corporate existence of the country. To this end, the PDP controlled Federal Government under Jonathan's administration particularly failed to get to grips with the menace. On the magnitude of insecurity in Nigeria at the time, the former US Presidential Nominee, Senator McCain described Jonathan's administration as practically non-existing government that has lost credibility in providing security for life and property (Ijewere and Dunmade, 2014).

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The episodic manifestations of Boko Haram insurgency overwhelmed President Good Luck Jonathan. From disturbing political killing to dare banditry, the result was the same helplessness (Nwobashi, 2015). The issue became a campaign rallying point for the opposition and the APC capitalized on the mass anxiety across Nigeria to rout the People’s Democratic Party out of power.

3. Internal Wrangling in the PDP

Lack of internal democracy within the People’s Democratic Party resulted to serious irreconcilable differences among the party stalwarts. The result became the formation of splinter group - the new PDP on August, 2013 under the leadership of Kawu Baraje. The gale of defections that followed this development resulted to loss of key figures in the PDP. Even former President Olusegun Obasanjo came out against Jonathan in the buildup to the 2015 Presidential election (Eme and Idike, 2015). The Party also became infamous for such undemocratic machinations such as do – or – die electoral contests, consensus candidature amongst others which contributed to mass disillusionment.

CONCLUSION

The first conclusion that emerged from this paper is that Nigeria and Brazil shares common political experiences of long stay of one political party in power. In the same vein, it was observed in the course of the study that the Workers’ Party of Brazil controlled the country’s presidency for a period of 13 straight years while the People’s Democratic Party of Nigeria ruled for 16 years.

Be this as it may, the paper essentially established that the tragic flaws of these two parties centered on certain comparative ills notably corruption, lack of internal democracy, mass poverty arising from bad governance, insecurity and inconsistency policy framework. Following from the above, the Workers’ Party consequently lost the grip of power and the People’s Democratic Party was as well humiliated by the opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) in 2015 general elections. The defeat of these two formerly hegemonic political parties in Nigeria and Brazil is not unconnected with the mismanagement of fortunes and inability to come to terms with the demands of the time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Workers’ Party of Brazil and the People’s Democratic Party of Nigeria should be vigilant and work assiduously to identify the flaws of their respective rivals in power namely the Social Liberal Party and the All Progressives Congress. This is the crux of organized opposition in a democratic milieu.
2. The electorates in both countries should learn from what happened in the past elections. Thus, voters should cognitively be aware that power belongs to them through the ballot and that they can change any bad government by identifying with the alternative Political Party.
3. The Judiciary and the Legislature as well as the police in Nigeria should live up to their expectations through investigating corrupt executives, arresting, impeaching or sentencing them as obtained in the case of former President Lula Da Silva of Brazil and Dilma Rouseff both of the PT.
4. It is imperative for the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) to effect positive change in the various sectors of Nigeria economy to make things different from what obtains on the past.
5. The idea of abruptly abandoning campaign promises, manifestoes or party ideology by ruling parties does not always augur well in the case in the long run. This was particularly with the Workers’ Party of Brazil when it abandoned its pro-social and pro-poor policies for neo-liberal policies, hence its defeat as a result of mass desertion.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Dr Humphrey N. Nwobashi and Fidelis C. Nnaji conceived the paper idea, reviewed literature and drafted the content of the study. Dr Anthony Itumo critically reviewed and revised the draft. All authors agreed on the manuscript's final version.

