The Legislature in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic and the Imperative for Ideology Politics for Transparent Governance in Africa

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Introduction

The legislature is a unit of the governmental tripod, others being the executive and the judicial arms of government. It is a representative institution with the primary responsibilities of lawmaking, representation and oversight of the executive. Political instability occasioned by military intervention, has over time disrupted the development and nurturing of a vibrant legislative and democratic culture of bargaining, compromise and tolerance of diverse views and interests, which representative politics is all about. The military background of the emergent political culture in Nigeria has tainted the understanding and essence of federalism, as many have difficulties distinguishing unity from uniformity (Bugaje, 2003).

In contemporary Nigerian politics, the legislative powers of the Nigerian Federation are vested in the National Assembly, comprising the Senate and the House of Representatives as clearly spelt out under section 4(1-2). Section 4(6-7) clearly defines the legislative powers of the State Houses of Assembly, similar to those of the National Assembly (Ayaegbunam, 2010; Akinsanya and Idang 2002). Representatives in the legislature are elected by popular vote, for a renewable term of four years and they are expectedly accountable to the electorate. The significance attached to the legislature derives largely from the extensive powers vested in the institution of parliament and the

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broad range of functions members are expected to perform as representatives of the people.

The legislature is to function within the confines of the separation of powers. Separation of powers entails the legislature has the primary responsibility of lawmaking, the executive’s function is implementation of the laws, while the judiciary is to interpret the laws and also serve as arbiter when and where necessary as Section 4(8) clearly stipulated. Separation of powers incorporates the principles of checks and balances among the three arms of government, to harmonize governmental activities and achieve inter-institutional synergy. Hence, constitutional provisions require that the executive recourse to the legislature to see government policies through and for fund to execute government programmes. This is to serve as an ultimate restraint against usurpation of the power of the legislature as well as possible arbitrary use of power by the executive. Executive assent is also required for a bill to become law as clearly stated under Sections 58(1-4) and 100(1-4) for the National and subnational legislatures respectively. The Constitution empowers the executive to veto bill, as it deems necessary, although such veto could be overridden by a two-thirds majority vote by the legislature in line with Sections 58(5) and 100(5). This is with a view to checking the possible abuse of powers by the legislature. Thus, the 1999 Constitution made adequate provisions for the effective functioning of representative legislatures.

The various structures of the Nigerian political system and their well-articulated roles and responsibilities are critical in promoting popular participation both in the democratic process and in the conduct of government business. Against the idea of representative government, Nigerians have often been denied the recognition of this right of popular participation, given the failure of the legislature in its representative callings and to effectively check the excesses of the executive.
This paper addresses some basic questions, chief of which revolve around: a) What factors accounted for the representative deficit of the legislature and legislative practices in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic? and b) What factors have hindered the effective performance of the legislature in accountability terms? We use library and archival searches to situate Nigeria’s dilemma of instituting enduring representative government and consolidating popular participation. We offer reflective insights into avoidable structural pitfalls in the nation’s renewed bid to engender popular participation through effective representative institutions particularly the legislature at the national and subnational levels. The paper falls within the area of political philosophy and leadership philosophy with a view to strengthening a culture of democratic practice in Nigeria and the continent of Africa.

The Nigerian National Assembly and Legislative Performance 1999-2015

There are divergent views on the performance of the legislature from 1999 to 2015. The National Assembly has undertaken the challenge of democratic consolidation when viewed against an empowered executive through prolonged military rule. In spite of several indications of executive dominance, the legislature has risen up considerably to checking the excesses of the executive. In some instances, it has not been a willing tool in the hands of the executive, notwithstanding differences in experiences and exposure of the major characters and players in both arms of government. But this has led to some noticeable gridlocks in executive-legislature relations.

As Oluwole (2011) observes, the National Assembly, in its composition in geographical terms represents the people at the various levels of the Nigerian political system. It symbolizes legitimacy and popular support for the system of rule and provides a platform for exchange of views and harmonization of interests between and among groups and individuals. It has provided a better alternative to authoritarian rule, preventing the re-
emergence of dictatorship, thereby justifying representative government. The legislature screens the executive’s nominees for appointments and postings, scrutinizes and passes annual budgets and supplementary appropriation bills. It demonstrates a strong will in making considerable inputs into the budgetary process, sometimes adjusting budget proposals made by the executive when and where considered necessary. The legislature also provides some oversight on the executive. It regularly receives the auditor-general’s report on public accounts, government ministries and agencies. The National Assembly has played significant role in approving international treaties and conventions the country subscribes to.

The Legislature recorded some measure of success in law-making. The legislature worked assiduously towards effecting comprehensive amendments to the 1999 Constitution and the Electoral Act 2010. The legislature has been a major stabilizer in the nation’s fragile and fledgling democracy. The National Assembly has to its credit the invocation of the Doctrine of Necessity that it authored and brought to bear to launch President Goodluck Jonathan to power as Nigeria’s President following the death of the incumbent, Alhaji Umar Yar’Adua after being hospitalized in Saudi Arabia. Passing such bills as the Sovereign Wealth bill, the Freedom of Information (FOI) Bill, Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism bills, Income Tax bill and other crucial ones that would affect the economy and Nigerians positively, speak volumes of the significant contributions of the legislature to national development (Oluwole, 2011). The two houses of the Nigerian legislature also demonstrated exceptional political will by leveraging on their two-thirds majority power to pass two bills – the Niger-Delta Development Commission bill of 2000 and the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2003 – having been unable to get the Presidential assent on both Bills. The legislature played prominent roles in shaping the business environment. It called into question several
managers of government business and intervened in critical transactions involving government and private concerns, including multinationals and corporate entities (Aiyede, 2006).

The above notwithstanding, the legislature at the national level has acted in questionable circumstances on a number of occasions. These include: the approval of declaration of a state of emergency in Plateau State by the executive; and the reprisal attack carried out by the military on the Odi community in Rivers State with enormous collateral damage on the order of the executive. The legislature was unable to check the perceived excesses of the executive on critical economic decisions, like the incessant increase in the price of petroleum products despite the socio-economic implications on the people. In the heat of the overbearing influence of the executive, the legislature was unable to maintain its independence by managing its own affairs as it appeared helpless while its principal officers were changed at will by the executive. The executive played central role in producing and removing the leadership of the National Assembly, particularly the Senate. Between 1999 and 2003, the Senate had three Presidents, just as it had two between 2004 and 2007 (Oluwole, 2011).

This was against the understanding that the independence of the Senate is desirable as attested to by its independent position and applauded disposition on former President Olusegun Obasanjo’s Third Term bid in 2007 under the leadership of Senator Ken Nnamani. The relative stability that the Senate enjoyed during this time was linked to the fact that Senator Nnamani was freely elected by his colleagues with little interference from the executive. It would be recalled that Senator Ken Nnamani replaced Senator Adolphus Wabara, who was generally believed to be an executive stooge (Oluwole, 2011).

The continued prevalence of the plague of corruption and the inability to stem the tide of financial mismanagement and outright pillaging of the treasury by public office
holders were major indicators of failure of the National Assembly in its oversight functions. Federal budgets suffered delays in passage and poor monitoring of implementation. The failure of oversight had also resulted in executive recklessness in the submission and implementation of annual budgets, thus making the exercise a mere ritual. In some instances, budgets were returned to the National Assembly for amendment and review following misgivings by the executive that the original figures were unnecessarily tampered with, thus posing problems of implementation for the executive. National Assembly committees have also been accused of conniving with ministries, agencies and departments to pad budgets due to complaints of inadequate budgetary allocations to meet their requirements. This practice characterized the lifespan of the legislature and sterilized the oversight powers of committees (Aiyede, 2006).

At the subnational level, the few credits due State Assemblies were overshadowed by the palpable manifestations of weakness on the part of the subnational institutions, resulting in alleged federal executive-instigated summary impeachment of State Governors. These were on allegations of corruption, abuse of office, and general misconduct leading to express arraignment and prosecution of some, confirmed indictment of many, and endless investigation of others. The cases of Ekiti, Plateau, Oyo, and Bayelsa States, were indicative of State Assemblies’ weak disposition to their legislative responsibilities largely on account of lack of focus and sense of commitment to defined causes. These were in clear breach of the importance attach to legislative institutions in the constitution, which generally underscores their centrality as crucial indicators of the desirable level of representativeness of the system of rule.

**Ideology in Global Context**

From the foregoing, four vital variables that explain some of the momentous phases in world history readily come to mind, namely: Colonialism; Revolutions; the
World Wars; and Globalization. Beneath these phases lies the sophistication of modern history. Each of these epochs was propelled by one form of ideology or the other. They each represent varying development curves across climes and continents. They have propelled changes and shaped world history. Except for the World Wars, all other variables were ideology personified. Notwithstanding, the various wars - First, Second World Wars and Cold War - were highly instrumental to the development of the modern state system. Scholars rightly posit that ‘war made state, and the state made war’ (Hague, and Harrop, 2004). Behind every war and revolutionary movement lies an ideology or a belief. Haywood rightly observes that modern progressive economies are propelled and ruled by ideas. Men and women of direct socio-political or economic experience who live under the illusion of been immune from intellectual influence, end up being slaves of mediocrity. Most pronounced are opportunists in power (Keynes 1963, 383). This speaks volume of the degree to which beliefs and theories formed the bedrock of human action (Haywood, 2003). Adam Smith and David Ricardo were prominent classical economists whose ideas produced the fundamentals of capitalism that pervades the global economic system long after their reign. It is to the credit of the writings of Karl Marx, and V. I. Lenin among other latter-day apostles of communist ideology that Soviet Communism was significantly shaped and sustained. History of Nazi Germany owes much recognition to the belief and tenacity of Adolf Hitler (Haywood, 2003).

In a similar vein, colonialism was informed by the desire for expansion, to extend the frontier of the state and local market (Gamble, 1981). With the French Revolution, the theoretical underpinnings of the Western democratic state were, in essence, complete (Hague, and Harrop, 2004). Early consciousness of the Western scholars on the imperativeness of ideas informed the domination of the world by Western ideas. Literature attests to the fact that, the West could be defined not only in terms of geography and
culture, but more importantly in terms of idea and ideology. It is a fact that, we live in a world dominated by Western techniques, Western ideas and Western states. Modern world is undoubtedly under the influence of the West in a way no other civilization has ever done (Gamble, 1981). While Western history is synonymous with world history, Western development is reminiscent of West determined ideals, ideas and ideology (Hague, and Harrop, 2004; Gamble, 1981).

A widely held ideology is at the root of virtually every economic success story, virile political and viable state system. Ideology best captures the essence of the record creativity and entrepreneurship that explains the accelerated growth and justifies the sustainable development that has been a major feature of the west. It is at the root of the welfare system that provides considerable leverage for the majority with multiple effects on the living condition of the citizenry. The lack of it or the little significance attached to it in other clime has met with the vagaries of underdevelopment and poor quality of lives that are characteristic of Nigeria and other developing countries of the world (Gamble, 1981). The importance and the centrality of the concept therefore necessitate a revisit of what it signifies. However, definitional elements patronized here are for the purpose of operationalizing the concept both for its historical significance as well as contemporary relevance. Our patronage of ideology was necessitated by the specific consideration of the interaction between ideas and politics, especially systems of ideas that make claims, whether justificatory or hortatory. Mindful of the context of this discourse, we do not intend to cut the concept off from its history all the same, even though historically it has been used in contradictory ways (Gamble, 1981).

**Ideology in Political Context**

Like any other concept, ideology means different thing to different people and different society. However, a more general application of the term suggests that; an
ideology is an agenda of things to discuss, questions to ask and hypotheses to make. It is a coherent set of ideas that provide the basis for organized action, be it political, economic, social or otherwise. It is intended to preserve, modify or overthrow the existing system of power (Haywood, 2003). Ideology is a deep-seated conviction and widely shared ideas of the people that cause drastic political actions. *Liberalism, Nationalism, Fascism, Socialism, Communism* and the likes are all major sets of ideas whose role in the secular politics of a country can very well be understood. Ideology accounts for the historic declaration and great charters adopted, for instance, by the people of England in 1689, of America in 1776, of France in 1789, of Russia in 1917 and so on (Johari, 1987).

Ideologies are born of crisis and feed on conflict. It comes in handy for people who need help to comprehend and cope with turbulent times and confusing circumstances. In combination with series of variables, it becomes a potent coping mechanism that for those who subscribe to it. It explains how change can and should be brought about, and explains political phenomenon that would otherwise remain mysterious or puzzling. It provides its adherents with criteria and standards of *evaluation* (Terence, and Dagger, 2002) and it is a response to and a means of defending or changing existing political system. It provides a language to conduct an examination of the political process. This is achieved through a jealously guided body of sacred documents (constitutions, bill of rights, manifestoes, and declarations), often championed by individuals who turned out to be heroes and heroines, founding fathers, seers and sages, originators and great interpreters (Johari, 1987).

To Terence, and Dagger (2002), ideology orients its adherents, giving them a sense of who they are and where they belong, and supplies rudimentary program of action. For example, this program provides an answer to the question of what is to be done. Who is to do it and with what means? A Marxist-Leninist, for instance, will answer these questions as follow: The working class must be emancipated from capitalist exploitation by means
of a revolution led by a vanguard party. Fascists, Feminists, liberals, conservatives, and others will definitely opt for other programs of political action. Above all, a political ideology is a more or less systematic set of ideas that performs four functions for those who hold it: the explanatory, the evaluative, the orientation, and programmatic functions (Terence and Dagger, 2002).

Johari (1987) reiterates the fact that ideology provides clear-cut alternatives as tool for understanding political realities. Practically, ideologies deal with the questions: Who will be the rulers? How will the rulers be selected, and by what principles will they govern? Ideology constitutes an argument that tends to persuade and counter opposing views, and integrally affects some of the major values of life. Ideologies are, in part, rationalizations of group interests - but not necessarily the interests of all groups espousing them. In other words, an ideology may not necessarily enjoy universal acceptability by all in a political system. They are normative, ethical, moral in tone and content. They are inevitably torn from their context in a broader belief system, and share the structural and stylistic properties of that system. It is not the content of the ideologies alone that distinguishes one from another; it is the function of the ideology within the political system that creates differentiation. Ideology is at the heart of a viable political party or group. It may be found that a scuffle between two leaders or between two groups is conducted within the framework of ideological arguments (Johari, 1987).

Gamble reiterates the fact that political ideas are more than passive reflection of vested interests or personal ambition. They have capacity to inspire and guide political action thus they can shape material life. Political ideas do not emerge in a vacuum but are informed more by the dictates of the time and development. In other words, all political ideas are molded by the social and historical circumstances in which they develop and by the political ambitions they serve. Simply put, ideology and practice are complementary,
even though the balance between pragmatic and ideological considerations clearly varies from politician to politician, and also at different stages in a politician’s career. This is a substance and synergy that is lacking in the Nigerian Fourth Republic politics culminating in protracted crisis that was the hallmark of successive administration from 1999 to 2015. (Gamble, 1981).

The Nigerian Experience in Party and Ideology Politics

Given that society thrives on ideology, and that there is a relationship between ideology and whatever culture a people projects, authors on the Nigerian politics have expressed concern about the seeming dearth of a single “Nigerian” political culture (Green, and Luehrmann (2003); Sodaro, et al (2004); Theen, and Wilson (1986); Joseph (1987)). Following Haywood, I have developed some useful posers that would guide our subsequent analysis as regards scholars’ conceptions of the underpinnings of any credible ideological leaning. Some posers stemmed from the understanding that ideology is crucial to successful participatory governance, as politics is more than ‘mere struggle for power.’ The questions then arise as to what values or beliefs do Nigerians, particularly the political actors hold, and why do they hold these values or beliefs? How do these views differ from those of, say, liberals, conservatives or socialists that have survived and sustain the Nigerian-type system of rule over the years? Above all, what ideological divisions exist - if there is any – in the contemporary Nigerian politics (Haywood, 2003, Joseph, 1987)? For example, it would appear as if the progressive and the conservative leaning of the immediate post-independence era faded away with the inauguration of the Obasanjo regime in 1999.

The PDP led administration was characterized by the pro and anti-third term divides in the latter part of the eight-year civilian administration of the Obasanjo Presidency. This division was deficient in substance as it was devoid of any ideological
colouration but informed by the dictate of circumstances or opposition based largely on sentiments (Haywood, 2003). In the same manner it would appear that Nigerians resort to discussing political gladiators rather than focusing on issues that are germane to the economic development and social transformation of the nation during and after election. Ideology of government in power, echoes of marginalization, quests for zoning, multiplicity of political parties, incessant defections of party members among others are some of what I consider to be identifiable character traits of men and women of direct political experience in the contemporary ideologically deficient Nigerian politics.

**The legislature in Party Politics**

There has been the dearth of enduring ideology, principles and philosophies in party politics from the foundations, evolution and development of political parties vis-à-vis party system in Nigeria and the Fourth Republic has been worse hit. Succinctly put, party politics has not attracted a system, in its normal characterization in which there are clearly defined political parties with contrasting visions, ideologies and policy platforms, and with stable membership and programmes. This has had damaging consequences for institution building, government, governance and the polity, particularly in terms of leadership, service delivery, and succession. Political parties have been mere contraptions contending with fluid and floating members united more by vices rather than by enduring virtues.

In legislative terms for example, in spite of party hegemony that was the lot of ruling parties in virtually all the States, the dearth of ideology accounted for the ease with which subnational legislatures were deployed against their executives through impeachment campaigns, despite being members of the same political party with the legislators. Members of the same ruling party, the PDP, who became willing tools at the disposal of forces outside the legislative institutions, and opposed to their Governors,
promoted impeachment campaigns against Governors of Ekiti, Plateau, Oyo, and Bayelsa. Oni (2013) recalls that almost all the Governors of the thirty-six States in Nigeria have been confronted with impeachment campaigns from Assemblies peopled by members of the same political parties. He observed further that no fewer than ten Deputy Governors lost their seats through impeachment. The affected States included: Abubakar Argungu, Kebbi; Iyiola Omisore, Osun; Abiodun Aluko and Abiodun Olujimi, Ekiti; Okey Udeh, Anambra, Olufemi Pedro, Lagos; and Eyinnaya Abaribe, Ebere Udeagu, and Chima Nwafor, all of Abia State. It is instructive that none of these victims was visited with impeachment on ideological ground but for reasons of political expediencies and primordial sentiment (Omotola, 2006). The above and select issues below represent highlights of developments in the Fourth Republic that make ideology-based party politics highly imperative.

Subnational legislatures recorded high turnovers of leadership through incessant deployment of impeachment. Omotola’s (2006) account recall that in the South-East and South-South, the first Speaker of Enugu State Assembly, Cletus Ereriebe and his counterpart in Edo State, Okosun, were impeached on charges of inefficiency; and “acts of impropriety and highhandedness” respectively. The Speaker of Abia State House of Assembly was changed twice within the first legislative year May 1999 and June 2000. The situation in Delta State was also not different where the Speaker was initially suspended and later impeached for visiting President Olusegun Obasanjo without the prior approval of the Assembly. The Speaker of the Akwa Ibom State Assembly, Gabriel Ada was impeached on September 6 2000 along with his Deputy, Orak Otu on allegations of “incompetence, insensitivity and high handedness in the conduct of the Assembly affairs.”

In the Southwest, the first Speaker of the Ekiti House of Assembly, who was on record to have had the shortest stay in office having stayed for only 37 days, resigned on
July 7 1999 due to impeachment threats from his colleagues. The first Speaker of the Oyo State Assembly, Kehinde Ayoola was impeached on November 24 1999. In Northern Nigeria, the Speaker of Kano State Assembly, Ibrahim Gwaramai and his Deputy, Zakari were impeached within the first legislative year. The Deputy Speaker of Sokoto State Assembly, Bello Atto was impeached for alleged incompetence. The Speaker of the Katsina State House of Assembly, Usman Mani Naama, who had earlier been suspended from office however, escaped being impeached following the failure of the principal witness to appear before the House Panel. The first female Speaker in Nigeria, and the Speaker of the Benue State House of Assembly, Margaret Icheen, was impeached in August 2000 for alleged inefficiency. She was however subsequently pardoned and granted conditional reinstatement on the intervention of prominent indigenes of the State, including the State Governor, George Akume. State Assemblies were characterized with intra-institutional conflicts and crisis resulting in lack of cohesion, indiscipline, high turnovers of leadership, primitive disposition of legislative responsibilities, and institutional instability (Omotola, 2006).

**Incessant Defection of Party Members**

The Fourth Republic witnessed a number of politicians crossing from one political party to another party solely to contest an election and return to the party thereafter. A pioneer defector in the Fourth Republic and frontline politician, Saminu Turaki, the Governor of Jigawa State for example, opened the floodgate of what was to become a permanent character trait of seasoned and aspiring public office seekers in politics. Turaki moved with his supporters from the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) on the platform of which he was elected as the substantive Governor of the State to the People’s Democratic Party (PDP), on which platform he aspired for re-election. While a school of thought likened the exodus to a face saving strategy against the Federal Government’s anti-
corruption war, others saw it as a desperate move to retain power capitalizing on the
disposition of the rampaging PDP to capture all states of the federation in the future
elections. Like his boss, to justify their movement from the All Nigerian Peoples’ Party
(ANPP) to the People Democratic Party (PDP) then, the Deputy Governor harped on the
nature of the Nigerian politics as informing their defection. He posited that the Nigerian
politics has not attained the requisite political maturity where any politician would ascribe
his or her tenacity in any party to a credible ideology.

Successive political aspirants at the national, and subnational levels have had to
change parties at the slightest provocation and disappointment, to realize personal political
ambitions at the expense of nurturing virile party platforms with enviable standards for
recruitment and nomination into political posts. For example, at the national level, the
Action Congress of Nigeria, (ACN)’s presidential candidates in the 2007, and 2011
general elections, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar (former Vice-President to President Obasanjo),
and Malam Nuhu Ribadu (former Chairman, Economic and Financial Crimes
Commission, EFCC), defected from the PDP. Alhaji Atiku Abubakar returned to the PDP
shortly after his abysmal performance in the 2007 general elections but defected from the
PDP to the APC - a party into which ACN fus sed - again in 2014 preparatory to the 2015
presidential elections. Malam Nuhu Ribadu again defected from the APC to the PDP in
2014 to enable him pick the gubernatorial ticket for Adamawa State against the 2015
elections. Several State Governors and legislators in the National, and subnational
Assemblies as well as political appointees change political party platforms at will for
reasons of political expediency.

In the South-West, Governors of Ogun, and Oyo States (2011-2015), Ibikunle
Amosun, and Abiola Ajimobi respectively defected from the ANPP to the ACN (ACN
was an offshoot of the AD) on the platform of which they both won the 2011
gubernatorial elections in their respective States. Prior to their defections and successes at the polls, both of them were Senators of the Federal Republic on the platform of ANPP. Governor Olusegun Mimiko of Ondo State defected first, from the PDP to the Labour Party on the platform of which he contested and won the gubernatorial elections for his first and second terms of office. He defected again from the Labour Party to the PDP in 2014, in solidarity with, and to enable him work for the success of his friend, and President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan in the 2015 presidential elections. This trend replicated itself in every zone of the country and across party line and in the legislative and executive institutions.

In the South-East for example, the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) lost Governor Rochas Okorocha of Imo State 2011-2015 to the All Progressives Congress (APC), and former Governor of Anambra State, Peter Obi defected from APGA to the PDP in solidarity with President Jonathan and to work for the President’s success in the 2015 presidential elections. The two governors elected on the Progressive Parties Alliance (PPA) platform duly returned to the PDP; virtually all the initial National Chairmen and many governors elected on APP/ANPP platform decamped to the PDP. There was no consideration for policy and ideology in all of these politicking. Politicians were generally concerned more with the ultimate objective of contest for power, winning elections, forming governments and sharing largesse rather than instituting virile political party platforms around credible and concrete beliefs, principles, and philosophies as against followership based on religious or ethnic sentiments and pecuniary benefits.

Defections and Party Membership in the Legislature

Defection of party members became recurring as the Jonathan administration draws to a close with the PDP losing its majority status twice within a year in the House of Representatives. It would be recalled that the PDP enjoyed majority status from the
inception of the Fourth Republic beginning 1999. On December 18 2013, a group of 37 PDP members defected to the APC on the floor of the House. The loss of 37 members reduced the PDP numerical strength from 208 to 171 members. The APC’s 138 members prior to the defection of the 37, rose to 175 after the defection. The APC has hardly settled down with its majority status to call for the re-organization of positions in the House when series of litigations by the PDP, resulted in a number of injunctions staying further actions on any matters relating to defections. The APC subsequently lost some members to the PDP, and fell back to its leading opposition status in the House until the fallout of the primaries altered the equation in favour of the APC.

The PDP was again caught in the web of defection following the fallout of the December 8 2014 PDP primaries that left most of its members without return tickets to contest the 2015 general elections. Many aggrieved party members decamped to other parties including APGA, SDP and the PDM on allegation of manipulation of, and dissatisfaction with the conduct of the primaries. The APC reaped bountifully from this defection with harvest of defectors, which enable it to move from the main opposition to the majority party, controlling 179 members from about 152 members prior to the December primaries. The PDP was hence down to 162 members. The balance of 19 members was distributed among the Social Democratic Party (10); Labour Party (3); All Progressive Grand Alliance (3); Peoples Democratic Movement (2); and Accord Party (1), making a total of 360 members (John, 2015).

**Fragmented Legislatures**

Within the context of this discourse, a number of State Assemblies in Nigeria during the period under review could be characterized as a fragmented legislatures. They were chaotic and crisis ridden with accusation and counter-accusations of secret oath-taking and dual loyalty to the executive and the legislature at the same time. The removal
of Speakers, Deputy Speakers and other principal officers of many State Assemblies had their roots in the intra-institutional crisis that became the hallmark of the subnational legislatures and legislative practices in the Fourth Republic. The legislature’s operations were mired by intra-institutional violence and primitive disposition to their legislative responsibilities. With no clear-cut party ideology as a unifying force, lawmakers threw caution to the winds, discountenance every sense of direction and worked at cross-purposes. There were crises of confidence among legislators on the one hand and between legislatures and executives on the other hand.

On account of the above gap, legislatures were basically uncoordinated and ineffective as developments in a number of the States suggested. Factionalization of the legislature remained a recurring feature in the legislative practices within the context of legislative-executive relations. This development reigned supreme in Plateau, Oyo, Ogun, Rivers, Edo, and Ekiti states Houses of Assembly. For example, while minority members of the State House of Assembly purportedly impeached the State Governors in Plateau and Oyo State, the two factions into which the Ogun State House of Assembly was divided engaged one another in accusations and counter-accusations of cultic oath taking. In addition to the case of Ekiti, the Edo State APC faction of the lawmakers was reported to have operated from the Government House while the factional PDP legislators held separate sittings elsewhere after their prolonged exile outside the State. The same scenario played itself out in River State where the State Assembly was factionalized between the pro and anti-Governor’s factions. It would be recalled that it was in the same spirit that the then Governor of Plateau State, Joshua Dariye was purportedly impeached by eight of the 24-member Plateau State House of Assembly (Abdulsalami, 2006).

**Imperative for Ideology Politics**
In the light of the above considerations, it can be inferred that, ideology has the benefits of enhancing institutional cohesion, loyalty and a heightened sense of commitment through promotion of issues of common interest. It has both proactive and retroactive effects on participatory and representative government. It has the capacity to facilitate the entrenchment of discipline across party lines. It is a veritable tool for building virile party system as it promotes and institutionalizes sustainable democratic culture and representative ethos. Ideology, being the bedrock of strong, viable and sustainable economy guarantees the protection of citizens’ interest, thereby enhancing the patriotic disposition of those who subscribe to it. Thus far, rather than come up with credible plans and programs that could lift the country economically, politically, etc, politicians are preoccupied with power at the center. Although, an average politician has the practical knowledge of the problem; but it has become more fashionable to get fixated with mundane issues because the party on the platform of which elected officials get to power have no credible means of evaluating their performance and no avenue to challenge their disservice to the party and the nation.

This author recalls Awolowo’s (1968) distinct postulations on core political economy variables of federalism, socialism and leadership. Obafemi Awolowo’s vision, mission, ideals and ideology on the economy and politics were clear and unambiguous across his writings and expositions. In his book: The People’s Republic, he underscores the applicability of scientific methodology to any kind of social problems, and insists that all social problems can and should be solved by employing the tools of scientific investigation. He was averse to any recourse to ‘trial and error and the rule of thumb’ in the search for a solution to social problem. In specific terms, to justify his position on the need for Nigeria to practice true federalism, Awolowo advanced four principles or laws being ‘summative deduction’ arrived at after careful study and analysis of the
constitutional evolution of every state in the world. These principles are namely: 1) If a
country is uni-lingual and uni-national, the constitution must be Unitary; 2) If a country is
uni-lingual or bi-lingual or multi-lingual, and also consists of communities which, though
belonging to the same nation, have, over a period of years, developed some important
cultural divergences as well as autonomous geographical separateness, the constitution
must be Federal, and the constituent States must be organized on the dual basis of
language and geographical separateness; 3) If a country is bi-lingual or multi-lingual, the
constitution must be Federal, and the constituent States must be organized on a linguistic
basis; and 4) Any experiment with a Unitary constitution in a bi-lingual or multi-lingual or
multi-national country must fail, in the long run. Awolowo summed up his conviction
thus:

I realize that many multi-lingual and multi-national countries continue to
be governed and administered, with a great measure of stability under a
unitary form of constitution. But I am of the opinion that the stability
enjoyed by these countries with inappropriate constitutions is false and an
illusion; and that such stability is possible, mainly because there is,
temporarily and for reasons, which can be ascertained and demonstrated,
an absence of national consciousness and ferment among the ethnic units,
which compose these countries. And since time and forces of dialectical
progression are not on the side of any fundamentally defective system, I
predict that every multi-lingual or multi-national country with a unitary
constitution must either eventually have a federal constitution based on the
principles which I have enunciated, or disintegrate, or be perennially
afflicted with disharmony and instability (Awolowo, 1968).
While these principles are of universal validity, their actual detailed applications must vary from one country to another, depending on obtainable peculiarities in each State. Awolowo cited cases around the world to buttress his argument and a number of his references still subsist till date. From the Scottish Nationalists’ clamour for independence and autonomous Government in the United Kingdom through the language feud between the Flemings and the Walloons in Belgium, and the minority agitation for regional autonomy within a Spanish federation to the fragmentation of Sudan into two independent States of Sudan and South Sudan, Awolowo’s principles have since been validated (Awolowo, 1968).

He argued that the Nigerian State required a suitable constitution, good Governments, and social objectives, which are social-orientated for Nigerians to enjoy the benefits of good life and fundamental rights. Nigeria must embrace and work for federalism, democracy, and socialism and at the same time, a leadership that possess mental magnitude. This, according to the late sage ‘requires hard work, self-discipline, loyalty, and dedication of a very high order, which are indispensable to a good life, to the operation of successful socialist regime, and to the attainment of mental magnitude. Education and health are not only indispensable to efficient production and higher productivity, but are also the essential pre-conditions of mental magnitude.’ This was to inform Awolowo’s unflinching commitment to the welfarist administration - free education, free health care and the like - he championed in politics and governance when his party the Action Group was in-charge in the Western region of Nigeria and the fulcrum of his campaign and quest for the highest office in Nigeria, the presidency on the platform of his party, the Unity Party o Nigeria (Awolowo, 1968).

On leadership, Awolowo reasoned and insisted rightly too that, those who aspire to lead Nigeria are expected to be equipped with the great attribute of mental magnitude
before they venture to embark on their great and onerous assignment. Otherwise, in the
Nigerian context, it would be a case of the blind leading the blind, as a defective and
inadequate leadership would only bring curses rather than blessings on the Nigerian
peoples. Such a leadership would fail to keep Nigeria harmoniously united, and bestow on
the peoples the benefits of an educated, healthy, prosperous, integrated, and happy life
(Awolowo, 1968).

Quite conversely, the PDP, aside from being the party in power (1999-2015),
 enjoyed the privilege of preponderance of elected and appointed public office holders in a
way that give character to the nation’s politics; yet the party could not be linked to any
credible and reassuring ideas, plans or programmes in line with the hopes, aspirations and
expectations of Nigerians prior to and during civilian rule. Values that are being projected
by political parties leave much to be desired for the consolidation of representative
government and the transformation of the economy to support the system of governance in
Nigeria. Quite significantly, the size of the party - PDP - with its successive majority - has
been more of a burden rather than asset, lacking basic unifying substance and painting a
glooming picture of successful institutionalization of virile party politics in Nigeria.

Again, notwithstanding its majority status, the PDP failed to showcase the best of
the nation’s politics and represent the best in the polity. It suffered relative fragmentation,
internal crisis of confidence and preponderance of dissenting views. However, the air of
confusion and crisis were not the exclusive preserve of the PDP; it cut across virtually all
other political parties that had fielded candidates for the successive elections since 1999. It
is to the deficiencies of the ideology politics that an average elected officials put up an
attitude of unquestionable overlords in their respective constituents. It is to the dearth of
credible ideas, desirable ideals and guiding set of belief or ideology that the electorates
appear to be bereft of basic evaluative strategies and assessment parameters to effectively
measure the performance of their representatives. Implicitly, whiles votes and elections often countless, elected officials see themselves as above the people and political parties on whose votes and platform they assumed office respectively.

The major actors in the Nigeria’s political landscape are political leaders and their retinue of followers. There is little to show that these key actors subscribe to the requisite compass to steer the ship of the nation’s prosperity. In other words, they appear not committed to credible ideals and ideology, such as could propel the citizenry to meaningfully participate in the governance process generally. The dearth of credible ideology, as observed here, could be gleaned from the prevailing air of defections and switching of parties by elected representatives, intra and inter-institutional rivalries, bickering, indiscipline and palpable chaos in the polity. The missing substance in the nation’s quest for enduring representative institutions also manifests high turnovers with implications for the cost of governance. Socio-economic and political issues of significance that call for ideological reorientation include, but are not limited to, the chaotic party politics.

It is also necessary to consider the need to internalize the essential democratic norms and practices as against incessant recourse to primordial loyalty. The need to arrest the prevailing tide of unwieldy multiplicity of political parties, a paradigm shift from “party in power” to “party of ideas”, checking the indiscriminate defection of party members and politicians of fortune, engendering a sense of tenacity of purpose, endurance and perseverance, and multiparty democracy to mention a few have become imperative. Recourse to ideology is of the essence, given that ideology is the compass that propels politics and economy alike; this clearly shows that ideology was at the heart of successful competitive and productive party politics that characterize systems that are held as models of popular participation and could be explored by emerging democracies. Much the same
is the fact that ideology is a necessary prelude to the realization of the ideals of democracy, as the crises and confusion that characterized the polity are manifestations of poverty of enduring ideology.

It is for reason of mitigating the institutional inadequacies and ideology deficit in the prevailing politics, public administration across Africa and the attendant consequences that Bewaji’s admonition and campaign for the development of an African-centred education system capable of addressing itself to peculiar African social problems across politics, economy, leadership and governance suffice. This is with a view to addressing palpable Africa’s leadership vacuums in many Africana societies where charlatans gained ascendancy and prominence in statecraft or were entrusted with responsibilities they were ill-prepared. There is the need for the fundamental restructuring of Africa’s education system rooted in ideology to engender real development of humanity across African societies beyond foreign interventions. At its peak, such system should have the tendency to eliminate cosmetic changes in the content of the curricular but properly situate African creativity and reflectivity, and advance the legacies of Africa’s founding fathers across sectors. It should also de-emphasise ideas and ideals that are concretely inferior to the religio-ethical values of Africans and move the continent and its peoples forward in greatness smatterings self-consciousness and often-myopic nationalism (Bewaji, 2008).

The campaign for restructuring of the education system stems from the understanding that Western education has failed in Africans societies, as did in many Western societies, and humanity. This is clearly manifesting in the tragedies of greed, insurgencies and civil strives, war and mis-governance that Africa contends with. The reasons for the failure and the type of failure are dissimilar. The failure of Western education in Africa is a consequence of a cognitive dearth - a lack of understanding of the complexity of Western education, leading to the belief that attainment of formal Western
educational certification is equivalent to being educated in the real and most important cultural sense of the word. Bewaji, (2008) observes that:

This has led to the leadership in Africa and her Diaspora selectively embracing the conventions and norms of behaviour of the West when and wherever these are convenient. Hence, what would be regarded as scandalous in traditional indigenous societies in Africa and contemporary European and American and Japanese societies such as bribery, corruption, graft, and theft in high places, equivalents of the highway robberies by the criminals of lower pedigree or/and robberies of state treasuries using the pen type are now regarded as normal or quasi normal having become the daily diet of the people. And matters are not helped much by religion, as the Western religion of Christianity conceives of the Supreme Being as a long-suffering God, slow to anger and quick to forgive.

By and large, the failure of Nigeria being the nerve-centre of the African continent mired in the worst kind of kleptocracy remained the failure of all black and peoples of African descent worldwide. For Nigeria nay Africa to make concrete progress, there is the need for paradigm shift through the re-education of political actors and stakeholders to collectively make amends for the weakness of the country’s social and political institutions and structures, which sustain the pervading air of desperation and spoils system in the polity. This could be better facilitated through the overhaul of our educational processes, structures, systems and curricular (Bewaji, 2008).

Concluding Remarks

The challenge of institutional inadequacies and chaotic politics is to be located largely in the human resource content. Bereft of Awolowo’s mental magnitude, wholesale
import of foreign values undermines the inherent enviable traditional African value system that is supportive of institutional efficiency, personal discipline and selfless service. The paper observes that there is a relationship between commitment to ideals and ideology, discipline, institutional cohesion, enhanced capacity and the legislature’s autonomy and legislative effectiveness, with attendant implications for transparent and accountability based governance practices. This observation stemmed from the fact that despite relative homogeneity, the crises that engulfed legislatures at the national and subnational levels during the period 1999-2015 were bolstered largely by the chaotic party politics, widespread indiscipline arising from dearth of ideology coupled with the passivity of a traumatised and disenchanted citizenry.

Consolidating the nation’s representative government through institutionalised virile legislatures would require ideological and programmatic competitive party system. In other words, the paper argues that for legislatures to perform highly effectively and contribute to the enhancement of effective representative governance, they would require restructuring and strengthening and they would have to be peopled with individuals to be drawn from political parties that are ideological grounded. This is more so when we bear in mind that enduring and democratically productive legislature-executive relation would require ideological and programmatic party system, institutional independence and enhanced capacity. Legislatures should be restructured and strengthened to enable them assert themselves and to overcome their own collective inadequacies.

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